

LE MANS 24 HOURS YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE

AUTOSPORT

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12 AUGUST 2021

Start of a new Le Mans era

Hypercars and ex-F1 aces head to the greatest endurance race

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Le Mans
preview



PLUS

M-Sport's fresh WRC challenge

Last hurrah of a legendary F1 team

Ford's rising star of the BTCC





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New cars and tough battles for the world's greatest enduro

It's not June, but the Le Mans 24 Hours is upon us. For the second year in a row, the world's greatest endurance race is not in its traditional slot, but it is different to last year's edition in two key ways.

The first is that spectators are back. The pandemic is far from over, but things are gradually heading in the right direction and the 24 Hours has long been one of the events for motorsport fans to attend.

The other is that the new era of sportscar racing has arrived. The Hypercar regulations have started in a modest fashion, with Toyota leading the way just as it did at the end of the LMP1 ruleset, but the potential is there, with Ferrari, Porsche, Audi, BMW, Peugeot and Acura all eyeing various LMH or LMDh programmes.

Our traditional free Le Mans guide covers the new rules and all the leading contenders, as well as the enthralling class battles. The hard-fought LMP2 category includes 11 ex-Formula 1 drivers...

Away from sportscar racing, we look back at the final winning period for BRM with the help of designer Tony Southgate (page 16), talk to key figures at M-Sport and Ford about the new Puma World Rally Car project (p22), and hear from one of the most enthusiastic racers on the British Touring Car grid: Jake Hill (p26).

As ever, there's plenty happening in club motorsport, so we've also got a bumper 24-page National section with the latest news, events and opinions from paddocks around the UK (p45).



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NEXT WEEK
19 AUGUST

Schumacher special
We talk to Mick and look
back at Michael's early
days in F1

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PIT & PADDOCK

- 4 McLaren takes major stake in Indy team
- 6 FIA rejects Aston Martin F1 evidence
- 8 Hypercars get Le Mans power boost
- 11 Opinion: Lewis Duncan
- 12 Opinion: James Newbold
- 13 Feedback: your letters

INSIGHT

- 16 BRM's last Formula 1 hurrah
- 22 M-Sport and its new WRC challenger
- 26 Ford's versatile rising BTCC star

RACE CENTRE

- 30 World of Sport: IndyCar; IMSA; DTM; Pure ETCR; NASCAR Cup; NASCAR Xfinity; MotoGP

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 46 Bevan Imp back on track
- 51 Motorsport UK to organise British F4
- 52 Obituary: Bernard Cottrell
- 54 Paddock fire hits Ginetta team
- 56 Opinion: Stefan Mackley
- 57 National reports: Knockhill; Snetterton; Silverstone; Brands Hatch; Croft
- 68 The ultimate trackday weapon?

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 70 What's on this week
- 72 From the archive: 2007 Spanish GP
- 74 What could have been: Wilson to Le Mans

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- 10 Special deals for Autosport

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McLAREN TAKES MAJORITY OWNERSHIP OF INDY TEAM

INDYCAR

McLaren Racing is to acquire a 75% stake in the Arrow McLaren SP IndyCar team by the end of this year, its second since returning to North American top-line racing after four decades away.

The team was founded by former IndyCar racer Sam Schmidt in 2001, with Ric Peterson joining in 2013 to form Schmidt Peterson Motorsports (SPM). McLaren returned to full-time IndyCar competition in 2020 to create Arrow McLaren SP as a strategic partnership with title sponsor Arrow Electronics and SPM.

Under the new structure, the team will be governed by a five-person board, comprising three McLaren Racing appointees together with Schmidt and Peterson, and chaired by McLaren CEO Zak Brown. Arrow McLaren SP president Taylor Kiel will continue to lead and oversee the operations, reporting directly to the board.

The team's Pato O'Ward currently lies third in the championship with five rounds left to run. The Mexican's team-mate Felix Rosenqvist has suffered a troubled

season, and missed two races following an accident due to a mechanical issue, but he looked far stronger at last weekend's inaugural Nashville street circuit round.

Brown confirmed in Nashville that both drivers will remain for 2022, but also stated that the team is seeking to expand to three full-time entries sooner rather than later.

"I think the racing team is doing really really well," said Brown, "and hopefully we can help turbocharge and accelerate its growth. We would like to run another car in 2023 – possibly in 2022 if we can find the right combination. We look at the way Penske goes racing with all of their cars capable of winning, and that's what we want to emulate."

He later added: "It's just about getting the right package together. We have resources so the economics are not a concern. We have to make sure that we get the right pilot in the race car, and there's not a lot of them on the market. So we've got a very short list, and if we can land someone that we think is capable of winning we'll go for it in 2022; if not, we'll spend 2022 making sure we find the right driver for 2023."

AMSP ran an extra car in the Indy 500 for Fernando Alonso in 2020 and Juan Pablo Montoya this year. Asked if McLaren's current F1 stars Lando Norris and Daniel Ricciardo could take part in the 500, Brown said: "They'd both like to do it, but they're very focused on Formula 1. Nothing in the immediate future but we'll see."

GROSJEAN'S ANDRETTI LINK

Romain Grosjean's frequently sparkling performances in his rookie IndyCar season with Dale Coyne Racing have attracted the attention of several rival teams, primarily Andretti Autosport.

Initially it was believed that the salary the ex-F1 driver was seeking exceeded what team owner Michael Andretti was prepared to pay, and that Ryan Hunter-Reay and James Hinchcliffe would be replaced by two current AA Indy Lights drivers, Kyle Kirkwood and Devlin DeFrancesco.

But Autosport understands that Grosjean's talks with Andretti have resumed, as he has not only lowered his expectations but also appeals to the #28 Hunter-Reay car's long-time primary sponsor DHL, whose

Rosenqvist (pictured in Nashville) and O'Ward will remain on board for 2022



contract expires at season's end.

That said, Dale Coyne still believes he has a good chance of retaining Grosjean. "I think he's happy with us, although I realise lots of people are looking at him right now," he told Autosport. "We've done a good job for him, I think he understands that."

"We took a chance on him, he took a chance on us, and I think it's worked out good for both of us and I hope that pays off for both of us and we're able to keep him next year."

Another European will make his IndyCar debut this weekend on the Indianapolis road course. Two-time Formula 2 race winner Christian Lundgaard will take over the 'extra' Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing entry driven in five of this year's races by Santino Ferrucci. The Alpine Academy driver tested for RLLR alongside Oliver Askew at Barber Motorsports Park two weeks ago.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

ROSSI WAVES GOODBYE TO MOTOGP

MOTOGP

Nine-time motorcycle grand prix world champion Valentino Rossi announced on the eve of last weekend's Styrian Grand Prix that he will retire from MotoGP at the end of the 2021 season.

A last-minute press conference was scheduled at the Red Bull Ring, where the 42-year-old Italian confirmed that his 26th GP season will be his last.

Rossi made his GP debut in 1996 in the 125cc class, and has gone on to claim seven top-tier titles and 115 GP victories, 89 of them in the premier category. He revealed that he had an offer from his own VR46 Ducati team to race on in 2022, but



felt the timing was right to call time on his career.

Tributes poured in across social media from all corners of motorsport congratulating Rossi on his career, with arch rivals Jorge Lorenzo and Casey Stoner among them. Marc Marquez admitted that MotoGP was "losing its biggest part" with Rossi retiring.

Rossi says he intends to continue racing beyond 2021, eyeing a switch to four wheels in GT3 racing. Though he has no clear plans on the horizon, he insisted that he would not continue competing simply for fun.

LEWIS DUNCAN

 P11 OPINION



Leclerc's engine written off

FORMULA 1

Charles Leclerc is set for grid penalties later this year after Ferrari found that his engine was written off in his crash with Lance Stroll at this month's Hungarian Grand Prix.

The discovery means that Leclerc will have to take his third and final allowed power unit of the year at the upcoming Belgian GP, and that will likely mean having to use a fourth engine later in the campaign, triggering a grid drop.

"The engine was irreparably damaged and cannot be used again, following the impact from Lance Stroll's Aston Martin," said a Ferrari statement. "This is a further blow for Scuderia Ferrari

and the Monegasque driver. This damage has a financial impact and also racing ramifications, given that over the remaining 12 race weekends this season, it is highly likely the team could be obliged to fit a fourth ICE to Charles's SF21, thus incurring grid penalties."

Ferrari has revealed plans to bring a 'significant' engine upgrade later this season when it introduces its final power unit components of the campaign. Team principal Mattia Binotto has confirmed that it will not happen before next month's Italian GP, meaning the new engine Leclerc has to run from the power-dependent Spa (and likely Monza) will be to the current spec.

JONATHAN NOBLE

FIA rejects review of Vettel exclusion

FORMULA 1

Aston Martin has failed in its bid to seek a review of Sebastian Vettel's exclusion from second place in the Hungarian Grand Prix at an FIA hearing on Monday.

Vettel's car failed to yield the mandatory one litre of fuel for post-race checks. Aston Martin initially claimed that telemetry showed there to be 1.44 litres more fuel in the car than the 0.3 litres pumped out. It said that a fuel system failure meant that the fuel had not been pumped into the tank where it could be accessed.

But at the hearing, the FIA denied the request to review the case because the latest indications from the team were that a mechanical problem potentially meant there was not one litre of fuel

left at all. For the request to review to be accepted, Aston Martin needed to provide a 'significant' and 'relevant' new element that was discovered after the event.

The team submitted analysis from more than 100 channels of fuel system-related data to show that there had been a fuel system failure in Vettel's car, whereby the air pump in the fuel cell activated a maximum output, which, by pumping air through the fuel cell, meant a significant amount of fuel was discharged from the car.

The FIA accepted that this evidence, which pointed to a malfunction of the fuel cell pressure relief valve, was a new element. But in light of further investigations, it emerged that Aston Martin believes that there was actually less than one litre of



fuel remaining in the car due to the fuel system problem. Therefore, the FIA felt that the new evidence was not relevant to the case.

Aston Martin team boss

Otmar Szafnauer said: "That is disappointing, and we will now consider our position in respect of the full appeal process."

JONATHAN NOBLE

Lamborghini weighs up LMDh entry

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Lamborghini could be the next manufacturer to jump on the LMDh bandwagon. The Italian marque has revealed that it is working towards joining the category in 2024 with the same chassis-engine platform that Volkswagen group sister brands Porsche and Audi will begin racing the year before.

Giorgio Sanna, boss of the Lamborghini Squadra Corse competitions department, revealed that there is "strong interest" in the LMP2-based category that will allow manufacturers to race in the World Endurance Championship and the IMSA SportsCar Championship in North America with the same machinery.

"We have always said that it is the right category for motorsport in general and also for Lamborghini," he said. "Clearly on the technical side the best opportunity is the VW group platform. We are sharing some ideas and vision inside the group and



I hope we will make a decision soon."

Sanna ruled out Lamborghini joining LMDh in year one of the formula in 2023: "For us it would be a big jump and we need time to prepare ourselves."

The timescale envisaged by Sanna is almost certainly linked to the capacity of Porsche/Audi chassis partner Multimatic Motorsports to develop the base car and different aerodynamic configurations, as well as to build chassis in significant numbers. Both German manufacturers have committed to having factory and customer cars on the grid from the get-go.

Sanna confirmed that Lamborghini was in

discussions last year with Dallara, one of four licensed P2 constructors, about LMDh. The change of tack is believed to have resulted from the original proposal being turned down at board level.

Bentley, another member of the VW group, is also known to have had discussions about using the same spine of an LMDh as Porsche and Audi for a return to Le Mans in time for the centenary of its first victory in 1924. Marque motorsport boss Paul Williams said that LMDh was "still a consideration" as it plots its motorsport future beyond GT3.

GARY WATKINS

Ireland in frame for 2022 WRC

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

An event in the United Kingdom is among six proposals fighting for four vacant spots on the 2022 World Rally Championship calendar, with a decision expected by September.

The WRC has been absent from the UK since 2019, after COVID-19 forced the cancellation of last year's Rally GB amid a decrease in funding from the Welsh government. It lost its place on last year's schedule to Belgium's Ypres Rally, which was delayed to 2021 due to the pandemic.

A bid fronted by promoter Bobby Willis attempted to take the WRC to Northern Ireland for this year, but the project failed to secure the £2million funding to run the event. Even so, the plan is still alive and is in the mix for a slot on a 13-round 2022 WRC calendar. It is understood that talks are ongoing with Tourism Northern Ireland to take the WRC to the province for the first time since 2009 (pictured).

"Yes they [the Northern Ireland promoter] are working hard to try to be part of the calendar," FIA rally director Yves Matton told Autosport. "I will not anticipate the result. I know that it is an ongoing process with the promoter. We all for sure want to have a rally in the UK and Great Britain. Where it is, is not the main issue; we would



MCKEIN

be happy to go back to Ireland. I would like in the future if we are able to, to have one event each year in Great Britain and go maybe to different regions. This would be in the trend of what we want to do.

"I'm really happy that at least these events [the nine confirmed] are now able to work and anticipate 2022, and I'm very confident that in September we will be

able to finalise the full calendar."

Croatia, Finland, Arctic Rally Finland and Ypres are all events featured on this year's calendar that are at this stage absent from the 2022 schedule. New Zealand is also in the mix, pending travel restrictions, after missing out on its 2020 slot due to COVID-19.

TOM HOWARD



SUTTON/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

End of road for Ticktum and Williams

FORMULA 1

Williams has parted company with its Formula 1 development driver Dan Ticktum.

The Formula 2 title contender first linked up with Williams's academy in December 2019 after exiting Red Bull's junior team midway through that year. But it emerged last week that he had been released by Williams, with Ticktum claiming it was because there was "no option for an F1

seat in 2022 for me".

The news of Ticktum's exit came days after he was heard making critical remarks about Williams race driver Nicholas Latifi while playing a video game on a live stream on his Twitch channel. He sang a rhyme in which he called Latifi "poo", and responded to a remark that he was only in F2 and that Latifi was in F1 by saying: "He's older than me, he paid to get there."

But Ticktum wrote on

Instagram that he and Williams parted ways "before the recent Latifi related incident, just so people know".

Ticktum's exit leaves Jack Aitken, Jamie Chadwick and Roy Nissany as the remaining members of the Williams driver academy. Aitken is the only one holding an FIA superlicence. The team will make no decision on its 2022 drivers until George Russell's future is clear.

LUKE SMITH

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Hypercars given full power for Le Mans



LE MANS 24 HOURS

The Toyota and Glickenhaus Le Mans Hypercars are set to race at full power in this month's Le Mans 24 Hours. They will begin the event with the same horsepower with which they have competed in the previous two rounds of the World Endurance Championship rather than the lower level originally envisaged for the French enduro.

The Toyota GR010 HYBRID will be allowed a peak power of 515kW and the Glickenhaus 007 LMH 520kW as at Monza last month and the Algarve circuit near Portimao in June, according to the Balance of Performance table published for this

weekend's Le Mans test day. The LMH rules lay down maximum power levels for the class of 520kW for regular WEC races and 500kW for Le Mans.

There has been no explanation of the move, but it is understood to reflect the efforts of the rulemakers – the FIA, and WEC promoter and Le Mans organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest – to maintain a separation between the Hypercar and LMP2 classes. The proximity on lap time of the P2 cars to the LMH machinery and the grandfathered Alpine LMP1 has been a major topic of discussion over the opening three rounds of the 2021 WEC.

The only change in the Hypercar class

BoP table for the test at Le Mans concerns the Alpine-Gibson A480 run by the French Signatech team. The maximum energy it can use over a stint has been reduced from 918 megajoules to 844MJ.

Toyota undertook its pre-Le Mans shakedown at Spa last weekend. Kamui Kobayashi and Brendon Hartley gave the two cars their final systems checks.

Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director Pascal Vasselon said: "The shakedown ran smoothly without any surprises. We ran checks on the various systems to be sure everything is in good order before the Le Mans test."

GARY WATKINS

New Brabham to race in international arena

GT2 EUROPEAN SERIES

Brabham Automotive will enter the new GT2 category with the first bespoke racer from the marque relaunched in 2018. The BT63 GT2 Concept will join the Porsches, Audis, Lamborghinis and KTM's already competing in the GT2 European Series from later this year.

Sporting director David Brabham described GT2 as "the next best step" as the Australian-based company plots a route to its eventual goal of competing at the Le Mans 24 Hours. The BT63 follows the

competition-spec version of the first model from the born-again brand, the BT62 ultimate trackday car, which has so far raced in Britcar.

"We are building the company up and next on the agenda was to have more volume, to get more cars out there racing," he explained. "It's a natural

progression and we're very excited about it."

The new car is based on the BT62, but will be different in key areas. The Ford-based engine will be reduced in capacity from 5.4 to 5.2 litres and push out approximately 100bhp less than the original car's 700bhp, with revised aero, and steel rather than carbon brakes.

A development car will race in the GT2 series finale at Paul Ricard in October before the definitive BT63 comes on stream for next season.

GARY WATKINS



F5000 Leda of McRae (inset)
leads Gethin's F1 BRM in
1972 International Trophy



Graham McRae 1940-2021

OBITUARY

New Zealander Graham McRae, who has died of a heart attack aged 81, was a star in Formula 5000's heady days, taming the V8-engined monsters in which he won in Europe, North America and across Australasia in brutal self-run programmes.

The big-talking Wellingtonian – dubbed 'Cassius' after boxer Clay, later Muhammad Ali – never appeared short of confidence in his pomp, when he aced successive Tasman Series titles in 1971-73, and the US crown in 1972. He battled demons, however, and in later life, when he eschewed medication for deep-rooted mental health issues, sadly destroyed many of his prized trophies.

Dissuaded from fighter pilot aspirations, McRae excelled in mechanical engineering. He raced an old FJ junior Brabham BT6 with a Lotus twin-cam engine in the late 1960s, then built his first McRae, impressing the establishment.

His first UK F5000 victory came in 1970's Brands Hatch finale when he beat compatriot Howden Ganley, the championship runner-up, in a similar McLaren M10B. McRae twice finished in the top six in the points, improving to third in 1972, when he won five races.

McRae's obsessive attention to detail was evident in the eponymous racing cars he designed and built. He made a proverbial silk purse from a sow's ear in transforming the Len Terry-originated Leda LT27 into the McRae GM1 of 1972, of which a dozen were sold before the company was bought by Roger Penske.

McRae's subsequent GM2, with its transparent cockpit surround, was no match for Lola's T332, but American Jack McCormack bought the design, renaming it Talon. Five were built, Chris Amon winning in one at Teretonga.

Indy 500 rookie of the year on his only start in 1973, McRae had the briefest of F1 cameo roles, with Frank Williams's Iso Marlboro, in the British GP at Silverstone two months later.

McRae, who never married, built magnificent Porsche 356 Speedster evocations in the 1990s before his daily struggles worsened. Loyal friends sustained him through a tough final few years.

"Graham was an amazing guy," said 1970 Tasman Series champion Graeme Lawrence. "While he and I raced together many times, surprisingly we never battled on track."

MARCUS PYE

IN THE HEADLINES

POURCHAIRE'S ALFA TEST

Record-breaking youngest-ever Formula 2 race winner Theo Pourchaire had his maiden Formula 1 test last week at the Hungaroring with Alfa Romeo. The 17-year-old Sauber junior drove a 2019-spec car during a 2022 Pirelli 18-inch tyre test. George Russell took part for Mercedes, Lando Norris and Daniel Ricciardo for McLaren, and Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz for Ferrari.

GAMES ARE OFF FOR 2021

The second edition of the Motorsport Games planned for Paul Ricard in October, already postponed from last year, has been delayed again until 2022. Continuing restrictions on international travel have resulted in the move to push back motorsport's Olympics, which would have welcomed national teams competing in 18 disciplines. A new date has been set for 29-30 October next year.

FANNIN'S LE MANS DEBUT

Jody Fannin will make his Le Mans 24 Hours debut next week aboard the JMW Motorsport Ferrari 488 GTE Evo he is racing in the European Le Mans Series this year. The 27-year-old, ELMS GTE champion with the British team in 2017, replaces American Robby Foley alongside Thomas Neubauer and Rodrigo Sales.

WINKELHOCK IN DTM

Audi GT3 ace Markus Winkelhock will make a one-off return to the DTM next week at the Nürburgring. Winkelhock will race an Abt Sportsline Audi R8 LMS in place of Sophia Florsch, who is contesting the clashing Le Mans 24 Hours.

JUNCOS BACK IN INDYCAR

Juncos Racing will return to the IndyCar Series for the final three races of 2021 and all of 2022, in the wake of a new partnership with ex-Williams F1 shareholder Brad Hollinger. The team will be known as Juncos Hollinger Racing.

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What Rossi has done for MotoGP

The legendary Italian has finally decided to retire from the pinnacle of motorcycle racing, but his impact on the sport will continue

LEWIS DUNCAN

Valentino Rossi's impact on MotoGP and motorsport as a whole can never be overstated. From the genesis of his career, in the footsteps of his ex-grand prix motorcycle racing father Graziano, the world watched with great expectancy.

Through his nine world titles (seven of which were in the premier class), 115 grand prix wins, his 235 podiums, his bitter rivalries with Max Biaggi, Sete Gibernau, Casey Stoner, Jorge Lorenzo and Marc Marquez, Rossi has been the driving force behind MotoGP's popularity in the 21st century.

Go to just about any town in the world and you'll be sure to find someone with a VR46 T-shirt. In pre-COVID times, the battalion of yellow-clad punters filling grandstand seats and yellow-smoke-bathed hillsides ensured any roof – both physical and metaphorically – would be torn off.

MotoGP's viewership across Europe effortlessly reaches millions. For years Dorna has hung its marketing to expand its fanbase on a 'Come for Rossi, stay for the show' policy, even as his results began to dry up. A slow Rossi has been better than no Rossi.

Since his 2015 title challenge dramatically fell off the rails amid a haze of paranoid conspiracy theories surrounding his rivals Marquez and Lorenzo, Rossi hasn't been quite the same. In 2016 he managed two wins and was runner-up in the standings again, but he won just once in 2017 and hasn't visited the top of the

"For years Dorna has hung its fanbase marketing on 'Come for Rossi, stay for the show'"

rostrum since that year's Dutch TT. In 2018 he managed five podiums. In 2019 that tally fell to two, while last year he managed just one amid a season largely influenced by a poor Yamaha and the latter half of his year being wrecked by COVID-19.

So far this season, he's finished no higher than 10th, amassing just 20 points from the first 10 races. It's his worst season ever in grand prix racing. Only twice has he outqualified team-mate Franco Morbidelli (who is riding a two-year-old bike), the average gap between the pair on Saturdays a whopping 0.639 seconds.

This is through no lack of trying on Rossi's part, though. After a difficult 2019, Rossi ditched crew chief Silvano Galbusera and elected to work with MotoGP novice David Munoz in the hope that a young, fresh perspective could help him break through again. Third in a punishing Jerez race, top-fives at Brno and the Red Bull

Ring as other Yamaha riders struggled, and competitive runs at Misano and at Barcelona proved his off-track efforts had worked.

His results have taken a nosedive in 2021, despite being on a Yamaha M1 that is vastly improved over its predecessor. But this can largely be traced to the rear tyre construction from Michelin, which got softer in 2020.

Such fine margins make the biggest difference in MotoGP, so it's no wonder Rossi, now 42, has fallen further back. But still he has pushed to find a way around his problems, putting 72 laps on the board during the post-Barcelona GP test in June. Whether retirement was on his mind or not, it showed Rossi wasn't resigned to simply fading away if 2021 was to be his last.

Still, people will say Rossi is retiring a couple of years too late. While it's hard to see such a legend struggling to crack the top 10, he has made every effort in recent years to extract the best from himself and last year at least proved the pace for the podium is still very much there – not that he has anything left to prove.

A bad final season will do nothing to diminish the Rossi legend, which has been hard-earned by the Italian, and he will continue to inspire young riders coming up into the world of motorcycle racing for many more years.

That is evident in his VR46 Riders Academy. Established in 2014 in an attempt to overturn the dearth of top Italian talent in grand prix racing, Rossi has guided two riders – Morbidelli and Francesco Bagnaia – to world titles in Moto2, provided a ladder into MotoGP for Morbidelli, Bagnaia and Luca Marini, and has nurtured Marco Bezzecchi, who is set to become his fourth Academy rider to step up to the top class next year.

Of course, Rossi's legacy also has black patches that must not be ignored when looking back over his career, such as the bitterness that erupted with Marquez in 2015, or erecting a wall in the Yamaha garage in 2008 to stop data spilling into Lorenzo's side of the team.

In the short term, Rossi still has a massive role to play for MotoGP. As COVID restrictions begin to lift across Europe, MotoGP is welcoming back bigger crowds. With 2021 now a farewell tour for Rossi, Dorna shouldn't struggle to sell tickets, offering a boost to MotoGP and local economies alike.

For a quarter of a century, Rossi has made history and changed the face of MotoGP forever. MotoGP must now look to a future without its biggest draw of the past two decades. The series is strong enough to weather whatever comes the way of the post-Rossi MotoGP era, though it must now focus on making stars of its current talent crop.

But for now, MotoGP can marvel in the incredible career of a charismatic figure, the like of which we may never see again. *

→ P36 MOTOGP REPORT



Argentina's 'other' champion

He may not be a global household name, but Argentina's latest motorsport hero Jose Maria Lopez may even overtake Fangio's tally of world titles

JAMES NEWBOLD

If Vernon Kay were to front a motorsport-themed edition of *Family Fortunes* and ask for the names of Argentinian racing drivers, you can bet the first answer would be five-time F1 world champion Juan Manuel Fangio. F1 devotees might cite Froilan Gonzalez or Carlos Reutemann, with Oscar Larrauri and Esteban Tuero at the niche end of the spectrum [yes, very niche! – ed].

It's unlikely that you'd immediately think of Toyota's World Endurance Championship charger Jose Maria Lopez for the simple reason that he never raced in motorsport's most popular series. But with four world titles (three in World Touring Cars and one in WEC) already to his name, Lopez is arguably the nation's foremost motorsport export since the late Reutemann, and it's not too much of a stretch to picture him surpassing Fangio in world titles.

'El Maestro' raced into his late forties – his famous record as F1's oldest champion, aged 46 in 1957, is unlikely to be surpassed – and there's no reason why 38-year-old Lopez couldn't do the same. The reigning WEC champion is operating at the height of his powers, as his recent showing at Monza proved – fastest in every practice session, he took pole in qualifying and, together with team-mates Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi, won the race (although he didn't set the fastest lap).

As with many drivers of his generation, Lopez grew up admiring Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher, but was conscious from

collapsed amid two difficult GP2 seasons and prompted a return home, where he became Argentina's most successful touring car ace. The experienced hardship of seeing his dreams wrested from his grasp – he cites being dropped by Renault in 2006 as harder even than the way he lost Le Mans in 2019 – has made his appreciation for what happened afterwards greater.

"Especially how it happened that I came back [to Europe] after being in Argentina," he says. "It was really hard to imagine if I think about 2013 when I was back racing there."

Given the veneration in which he is held, perhaps it's no surprise that Lopez hasn't given much thought to Fangio comparisons. "I never really thought about it," he says. "I'm quite humbled on that. Fangio got it in F1."

So what does motivate him? "The challenge to keep learning new things and keep improving," he replies. "I never liked to be on the comfort zone."

It would have been easy to stay in tin-tops after three WTCC titles on the spin with Citroen, outshining team-mates Yvan Muller and Sebastien Loeb. But he returned to single-seaters for the first time in a decade by switching to Formula E, initially with DS Virgin, comparing well against Sam Bird, before leaving in the expectation that he would follow DS to Techeetah. It didn't happen and he joined Dragon, where Lopez admits he often tried too hard to prove he merited a better seat.

At the same time, he was learning the ropes as an endurance driver. His Toyota career got off to a rocky start in 2017 – he crashed out of his debut in the wet at Silverstone, missed the following round at Spa, and was shifted to a third car for Le Mans. But his first win, on home turf for Toyota at Fuji the next year, showed Lopez was more than 'just' a touring car driver.

"I was kind of achieving everything in WTCC, and I still had this bittersweet [feeling] of missing F1," says Lopez. "So for me becoming a Toyota driver, racing Le Mans against people who have been in F1, it was a thing to push myself. To reach where I am today, I filled what I was missing. I feel like I've progressed a lot driving cars that are very advanced and very quick."

"Of course, championships are always nice to win, but we've been missing the Le Mans win for a few years so for me, Mike, Kamui, it's one of the things we're really pushing for and we hope we can achieve it together."

Fangio never finished in his four Le Mans starts, but was leading for Mercedes with Stirling Moss in 1955 when team-mate Pierre Levegh's tragic accident prompted his withdrawal. Lopez's misfortunes at the Circuit de la Sarthe are well known, but a first victory for his nation since Gonzalez in 1954 would only elevate his status at home further, and surely mean he is discussed among Argentina's true greats. ■

"Make no mistake, Lopez is a big deal in Argentina and by far its biggest motorsport star"

an early age of the impact that Fangio had on racing in Argentina.

"What we are, the little thing we have still in world motorsport, is because of him – because of Fangio," says Lopez, who says the nation's limited international presence is in part down to the strong domestic scene that, much like Australia, makes it possible for drivers to make a living locally.

Make no mistake, Lopez is a big deal in Argentina. Where Conway faces enormous competition from Britain's three F1 aces to gain public recognition, Lopez is far and away the biggest star in what he says is "one of the main sports in Argentina".

"Yeah, I'm recognised – especially in my city, in my province," he says. "Sometimes I try to avoid the street!"

But Lopez admits that wasn't the case until his Plan A of reaching F1 as part of the Renault Driver Development scheme

YOUR SAY

Technical rules can't be ignored because a driver entertains the crowd, otherwise chaos will ensue

PHIL OAKES

An illegal car is an illegal car...

Your correspondents Messrs Lewis-Crosby and Ritemann (5 August) seem to be confusing the application of the rules with emotion. An illegal car is an illegal car, and shouldn't be allowed in the race, and a car from which the required measurements or samples cannot be gleaned is an illegal car.

It's happened plenty of times before, James Hunt (Spain 1976), Alain Prost (San Marino 1985), and Lewis Hamilton (Spain 2012 qualifying) to name but three. Technical rules can't be ignored because a driver entertains the crowd, otherwise chaos will ensue.

Also, the stewards have to remove the emotion from their adjudication on driving-standards incidents. They have to look at each incident in isolation, otherwise a different penalty would ensue depending on whether the driver(s) involved are in the lead of the race or championship, or at the back.

And while we're at it, the only thing which "put another driver in hospital" was the rules. Max Verstappen appeared to be perfectly OK at the scene, but the mandated hospital visit would have been because the FIA-mandated G-metre on the car would have been triggered. Those are the rules, and that's a good thing.

Phil Oakes
Portishead

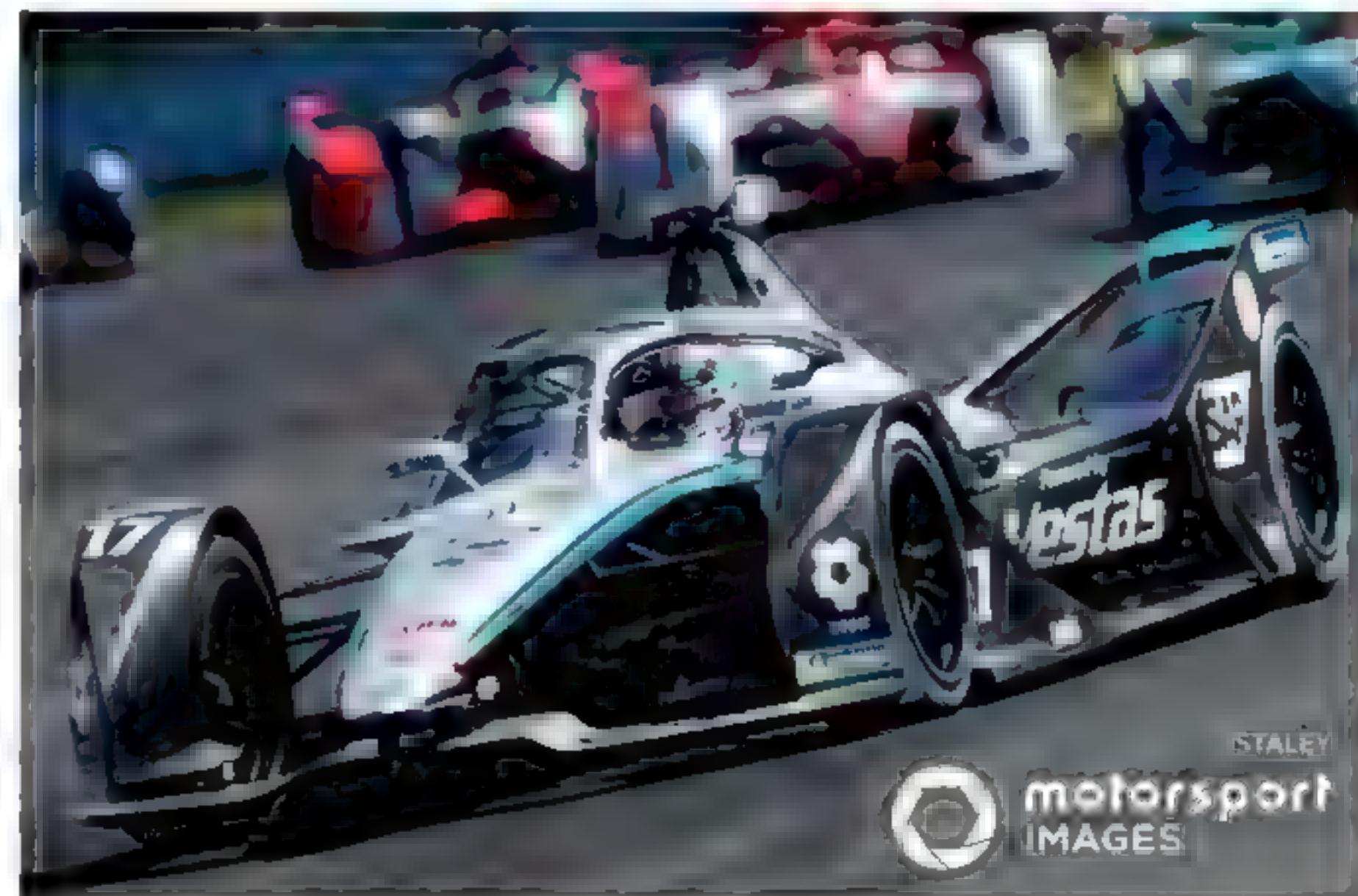
...but penalise the team, not the driver

Further to correspondence in last week's Autosport, Sebastian Vettel's disqualification from the Hungarian GP due to the inability to extract a one-litre fuel sample from the Aston Martin does seem harsh. Would it not be more appropriate to penalise the team only, and not the driver, in situations like this? One correspondent suggested a fine for the team. Alternatively, points could be deducted, leaving the driver's position and points intact.

Mark Gilbert
Portishead

A qualifying system that has to go

It must be possible to construct a mathematical model to maximise the chances of winning the Formula E title, but leading after the early rounds would probably not be a part of it. Some way



to cycle through the "qualifying system that hurts the best performers", as Matt Kew mentioned (Opinion, 29 July), would have to be devised. Not winning or even being in the top five of the championship at particular times may be the optimum.

This was made very clear by the qualifying positions of Sam Bird in the two London races. It's ridiculous, of course, that racing drivers should need to hold back in order to get a better chance at the following event (Sam didn't, but what if he had?).

The current qualifying system must be changed: may I suggest one version that would perhaps help? Continue as at present, but take the winner out of each group, and let them run-off for the top positions on the grid in a final shootout. That would offer a chance to qualify well regardless of the track conditions in their first run.

The only driver who could prove me wrong is Nyck de Vries (above), leader after round one: but what happened to him on round two? Two crashes due to low qualifying position. Watch him in Berlin: if he can win from the disadvantage of leading the championship, I shall honour him and withdraw my complaint.

Unless he does, the current series will produce a winner, but it will not, and cannot, produce a champion.

John Ashmore
Spalding

HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH

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ZERO COMPROMISE

After spending more than 20 years at the world's biggest racewear brands, Ago Alberghino noticed an opportunity to offer something different. Now, his HRX brand is supplying his stylish, bespoke, handmade Italian race suits to motorsport's biggest winners

In the world of sport, what you wear is just as important as how you wear it – and a race suit is no different. It must protect the driver from danger, feel comfortable to wear, and provide the right mobility behind the wheel of a hugely fast racing car. Having developed racewear for thousands of successful racing drivers, HRX has tasted success across many different categories.

Established in 2012 by Ago Alberghino in Turin, HRX has evolved from a passion project into one of motorsport's biggest racewear brands. With years of experience working with two of the largest motorsporting race equipment companies, Alberghino felt that on turning 50 he would launch his own and develop HRX's unique approach to working with the consumer at the race track.

"I spent all my life in motorsport," Alberghino says. "I was born with this need, and when I was young I started to race in the Renault 5 Cup. I decided it was the time to dedicate the latest part of my

life to build something – and in nine years, we found our market. I think the fact that I'm really involved with motorsport, that I like motorsport, gives to me the right connection with our customer."

HRX has enjoyed a particularly purple patch in motorsport of late. Together with United Autosports, it claimed victory in the LMP2 class of the 2020 24 Hours of Le Mans, and provided racewear to 2021 Indianapolis 500 winner Helio Castroneves – who claimed his fourth Indy 500 victory driving for Meyer Shank Racing.

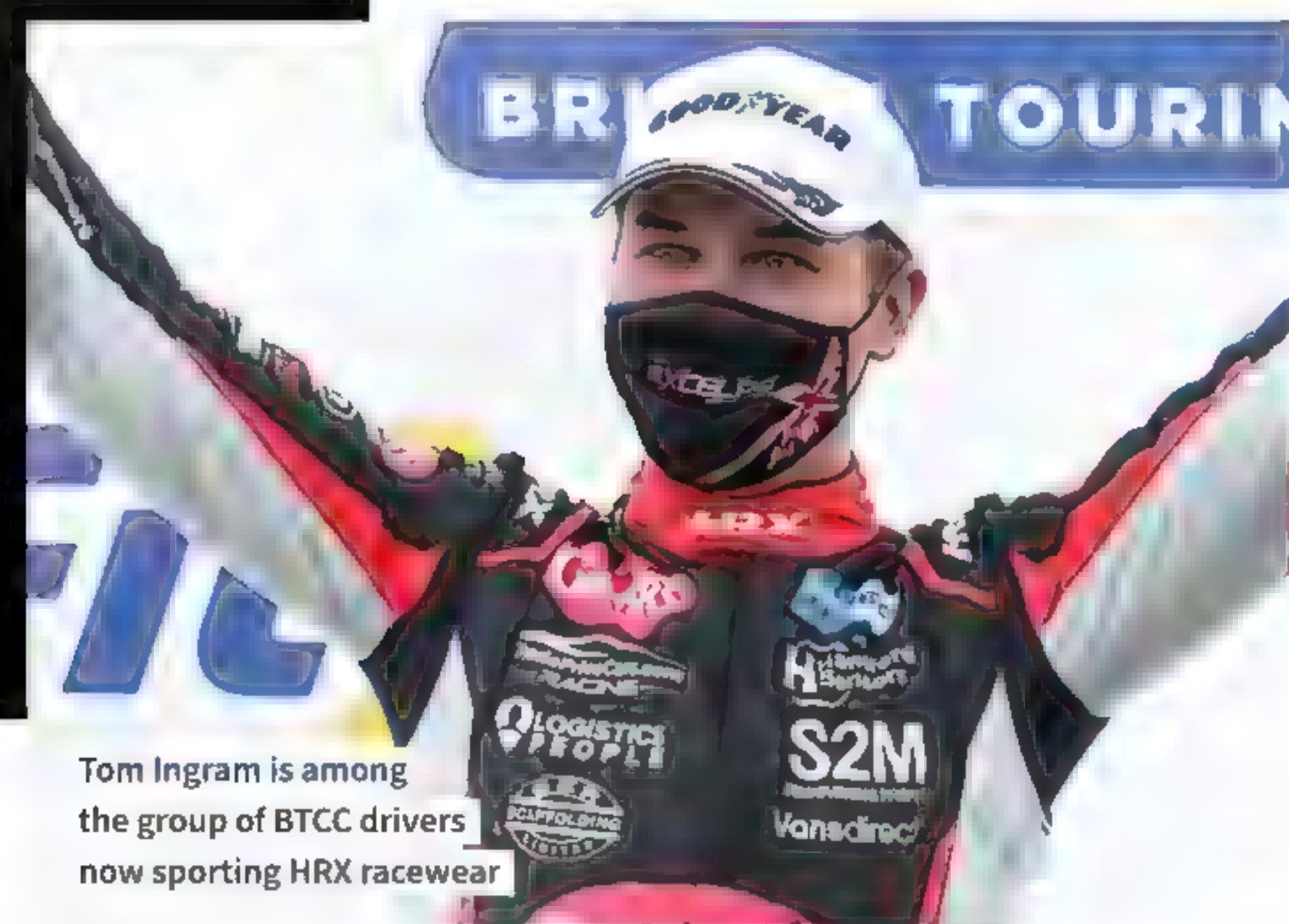
The Italian company has also enjoyed recent success in other championships, backing Ashley Sutton's two British Touring Car Championship titles. Alberghino explains that the race service HRX provides has been a significant part of converting teams and drivers to its line of products.

"We have teams that decided to work with us due to the quality of the material, and especially due to the service, and because we are speaking the same language," he explains. "For me, all these team owners or team managers are not customers; we are friends with these people and we have a personal relationship talking about motorsport."

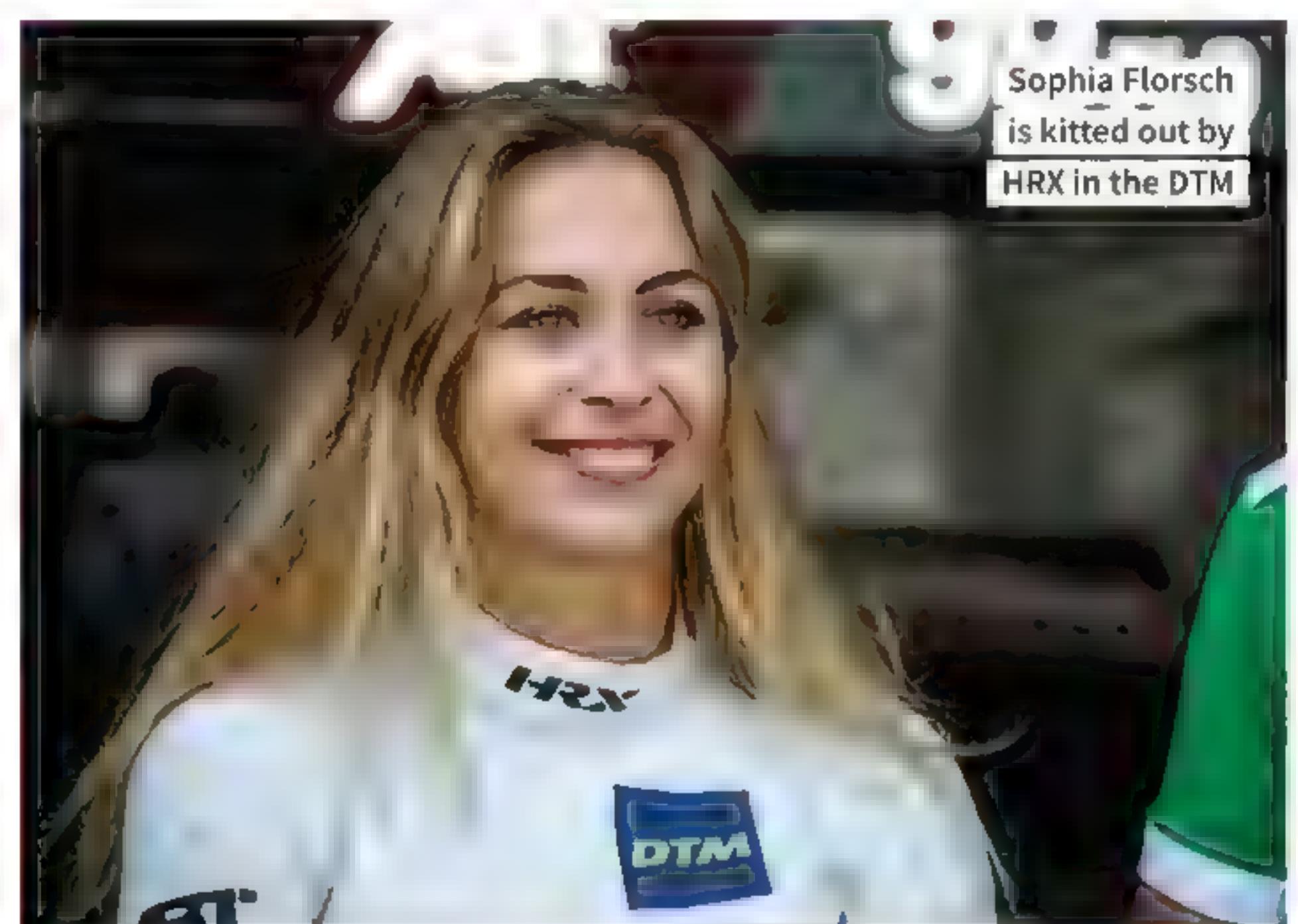
"I think the last two years, especially with Le Mans last year where United won LMP2, we're doing a lot together. In the US where we are growing a lot, where this year Castroneves won the Indy 500 with our suit, I think it was the time to let the people know more about the roots of HRX."

HRX, Alberghino explains, operates





Tom Ingram is among the group of BTCC drivers now sporting HRX racewear



Sophia Florsch is kitted out by HRX in the DTM

like a race team; racewear companies after all do more than simply send off-the-peg overalls to a driver. Everything is tailored to fit the driver and, after the initial measurements are turned into a bespoke race suit design, HRX provides trackside service to ensure the driver continues to remain comfortable in their kit.

For Castroneves and his Meyer Shank team, HRX got a headstart on preparing for their Indy 500 entry by sizing up the driver and his crew at the Daytona 24 Hours race in January.

"We are going up and down by aeroplane to supply everything, all the time. We have people that follow the races with the drivers. For Helio, we started to size the team in Daytona. We took his sizes to make the perfect suit for him, so we started four months before."

"This month we will have Le Mans, and we will attend for more or less two weeks. We have

to provide everything before the test day, because there is scrutineering and the photoshoot. If there is something that they need, we must be there. If there is something to adjust, we are able to adjust it for the day after – so this service for the big races is what we give daily to our customer."

Alberghino also explained that HRX provides no compromises in delivering the best product it can to its racing teams. Developing lighter materials that keep the drivers cool and comfortable while also adhering to all FIA-mandated safety requirements is critical in racewear development, and HRX's mantra has been to employ the best quality materials available in its products.

"The rule that we set at the start was that we must try to be one of the best. And there is only one way: to make no compromise in choosing the material that we are using to define our suits and other products. Our top level suit for professionals

is called the Zero Icon, and the reason why we call it that is because of zero compromise.

"The key was not to make compromises in choosing material. The suit must be light and must have the best perspiration – these are the two key points. To provide these two roles, there is no reason to choose a low-cost material that could be similar in a technical degree, because in reality they have a big difference."

Providing the right service with the right products is key for any company to be a success, and HRX is carrying that maxim into the world of motorsport with its range of bespoke and customer products. What you wear in motorsport is as important as how you wear it – and choosing the right racewear brand for you can help in both respects. *

WWW.HRXRACEWEAR.CO.UK

BRM'S LAST HURRAH

The championship-winning team had fallen on hard times in the late 1960s, but the arrival of fresh faces and new cars gave it one more boost as the next decade began

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES





BRM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP F1 STATS

Starts: 197
Fastest laps: 15
Wins: 17
Poles: 11



Yardley backing helped boost BRM, which then ran more and more cars...

Things were not looking good for BRM in 1969. The team that had scored a Formula 1 world title double in 1962 had slumped to fifth in the constructors' championship in 1968, and hadn't won a points-paying grand prix since the Monaco GP in 1966. And things were getting worse.

BRM had the services of 1964 world champion John Surtees and rising star Jackie Oliver, and had finally discarded the troublesome H16 engine in favour of a V12, but the squad's P138 and P139 were a long way behind the pacesetting Matra MS80 of Jackie Stewart.

Surtees was one of the key players to persuade chairman Louis Stanley, who was married to Jean Owen, the sister of BRM owner Sir Alfred Owen, that change was needed. "It was an interesting period," recalls Oliver. "BRM was a very successful team, but there was no designer and the car was old-fashioned. The ways John sorted things out upset people, but he was right."

Surtees would finish third in the 1969 United States GP towards season's end before leaving to focus on his own team, but the changes he'd helped instigate soon started to have an effect. And one of the key ones was getting up-and-coming designer Tony Southgate on board.

Southgate was working with Dan Gurney's team in the States when Surtees approached him at Riverside. "I accepted in a microsecond because I wanted to get back into F1," recalls Southgate, who joined BRM in July 1969.

There were other changes. Long-time BRM engineer and designer Tony Rudd stepped down during 1969, Aubrey Woods became chief engineer and Tim Parnell became team manager in August.

Southgate quickly saw the enormity of the task ahead. "I thought, 'There's only one way we can go with this – and that's up,'" he says. "BRM were different because they made the whole car. I think the engineers sometimes concentrated too much on a particular aspect and didn't keep up with modern trends."

At the German GP at the Nurburgring the P139 flexed so much that even Surtees – a Nordschleife master – didn't want to race it. "John was scared so we made up an excuse," recalls Southgate of the car's withdrawal from the event.

Southgate didn't have much time to produce a new car for 1970, so the P153 was neat and tidy rather than revolutionary. He even put a stop to fledgling ground-effect experimentation because it was "too risky". Stanley brought in Yardley sponsorship, and Pedro Rodriguez, who had starred for the team in 1968, returned alongside Oliver.

"Last summer's long overdue shake-up within the cloisters of BRM at Bourne seems at last to be bearing fruit," wrote Autosport's Patrick McNally in February 1970. He described the P153 as an "utterly practical straightforward design", and pointed out it was lighter than its predecessor, with titanium and magnesium being used. The car did carry over some parts from before – not an unusual occurrence at the time – such as gearbox and driveshafts.

With limited time available, Woods could not produce an all-new engine, but extensive work was done, particularly on the cylinder heads. BRM remained one of the few teams to build its own engine rather than plump for the Cosworth DFV. >>



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"The V12 was nice and compact, light and had good horsepower," reckons Southgate. "It used a lot more fuel [than a DFV] so you had more at the start of races. Reliability was tricky because to make it that small they'd been very tight on the bearings, about 10% too small. They threw rods. We had 12 engines while I was there, and by the time I left in 1972 only one didn't have a welded-up block."

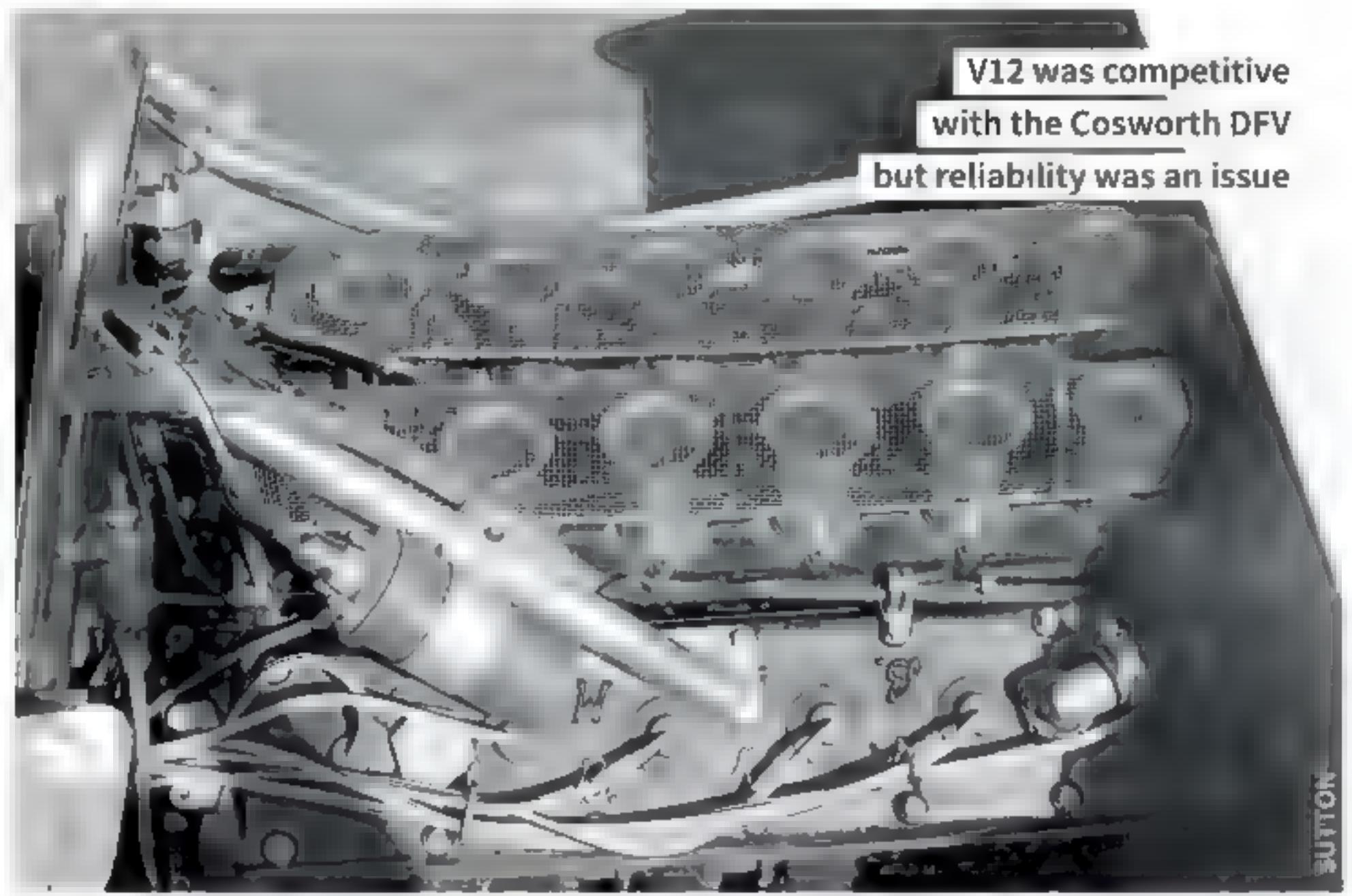
The 425bhp engine also couldn't be used as a stressed member like the DFV, though Southgate made it semi-stressed and doesn't believe that was a disadvantage. "The car was well-balanced," says Southgate. "Pedro slotted in and was great."

Oliver agrees that the improvement was clear. "The 1969 car was a tractor and Tony's was a modern car, but the engine department was not," he says. "The V12 was powerful but not reliable. It should have won a lot of races."

There were other teething problems, too. In the season-opening South African GP, Oliver had two stub axle failures in practice, then retired from the race with gearbox problems. Third driver George Eaton suffered an engine failure on his old P139, while Rodriguez finished a delayed ninth. "The biggest problem was the stub axles broke," admits Southgate. "With the bolt-on wheels, which are not as strong as knock-on, where the flange meets the axle is a critical area and I got it wrong."

Southgate immediately beefed up the rear, only for the fronts to fail in Spain. That put Oliver out of the race in a fiery crash with Jacky Ickx's Ferrari and forced BRM to withdraw an angry Rodriguez, who was running in the points (then awarded to the top six). "He wouldn't come in and when he eventually did he was furious. He said 'don't worry about that!'" recalls Southgate.

Rodriguez wasn't too interested in qualifying, but he did tend to move forward in the races. Unfortunately, there were still a lot of retirements and Oliver's finishing record was even worse. Rodriguez took sixth at Monaco — he'd been second only to





Stewart's March in the wettest practice session — despite a stop for a sticking throttle, while Oliver's V12 failed him.

Southgate identified that he needed to get as much oil through the engine as possible and added an enormous oil tank for the Belgian GP at Spa, which would provide a season highlight. At a track on which he always excelled, Rodriguez qualified sixth and charged into the lead in five laps. He then held off a determined Chris Amon (March) to take BRM's first win for four years.

The P153 was now showing its pace but reliability remained a weakness. Both Oliver and Rodriguez ran in the top five in the Dutch GP, and Rodriguez quickly got into the top six from 10th on the grid in France, but each time issues, normally engine or gearbox related, denied the team. "Pedro should have had much better results, but we had the axles and the engine was a bit like a grenade," says Southgate.

Perhaps Oliver's best drive came at the British GP — "Pedro was bloody quick at Spa, I got my own back at Brands Hatch," he says. The Briton qualified fourth, with Rodriguez back in 15th after two engine failures in practice, and ran third behind the battle between Jochen Rindt and Jack Brabham following Ickx's early retirement. Sadly, engine failure once again robbed him.

But in the second half of the season Rodriguez, along with Stewart, became one of the main threats to the rapid Ferraris, and four points finishes in the final five races helped the Mexican to seventh in the drivers' table. He split the Ferraris by qualifying second for the Italian GP, and might have won the United States GP had he not needed a late splash-and-dash, enough to drop him behind rookie Emerson Fittipaldi's Lotus.

BRM slipped to sixth in the standings, but things were clearly coming together and for 1971 Southgate produced the P160, the last great BRM. "I had more time to think about the package with the P160," says Southgate. "It was a refined, sleeker and neater version of the P153. The P160 was my favourite F1 car and all the drivers said it was easy to drive."

BRM switched from departing Dunlop to Firestone tyres, resulting in a move to 15in rears (as opposed to 13in all-round on the P153) and some tweaks, but otherwise the package was proven. The P160 also had a lower and wider monocoque, revised >

suspension geometry, and a better oil system.

Rodriguez's 1970 drives for BRM and the JW Automotive Engineering team in sportscars had established him as one of the top three or four drivers in the world, while Porsche star Jo Siffert, already a GP winner, replaced Oliver.

The squad was no longer "a new team" as Southgate describes it in 1970. "In 1971 we got it all working," adds the 81-year-old. "The engine was at its best and the whole car was competitive."

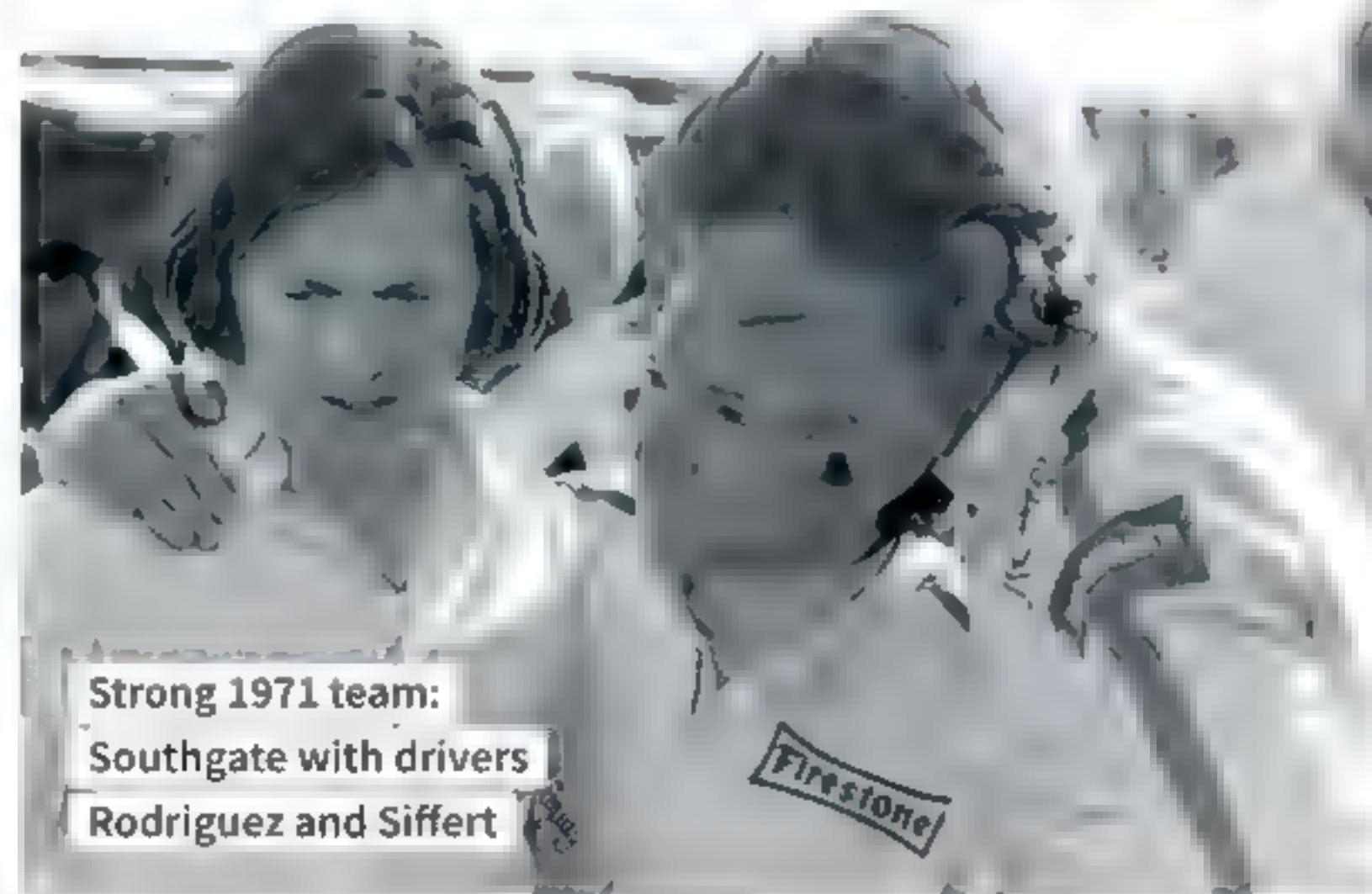
Rodriguez, who jumped from 10th to fifth on the first lap, and Siffert suffered with overheating in the South African GP, but the non-championship Spring Cup at Oulton Park provided a fillip. Rodriguez beat Stewart's Tyrrell and the McLaren of Peter Gethin to win, then finished fourth in Spain.

Siffert ran second early on and looked set for third at Monaco before an oil pipe broke on a day when Rodriguez, never at his best around the principality, biffed a kerb. The roles were reversed at Zandvoort, Rodriguez engaging in one of the great wet-weather battles with Ickx before finishing second, and Siffert recovering to sixth after an early spin.

Things were looking good, but an annoyingly small issue kept rearing its head. "I mounted the coil — a regular Lucas coil — on the rollover bar because it was strong and convenient," explains Southgate. "What I didn't realise was that there was a high-frequency vibration and it broke the internals of the coil."

That cost Rodriguez second place at the French GP, but he was still fourth in the drivers' table when he was killed in an Interserie race at the Norisring. It was a big blow, but Siffert immediately stepped up, qualifying third for the British GP and running second before the ignition coil trouble struck again.

"Pedro was treated as number one, but the equipment was the same," says Southgate. "Jo was a very good driver — understanding, not a technical driver. Pedro was slightly easier to please."

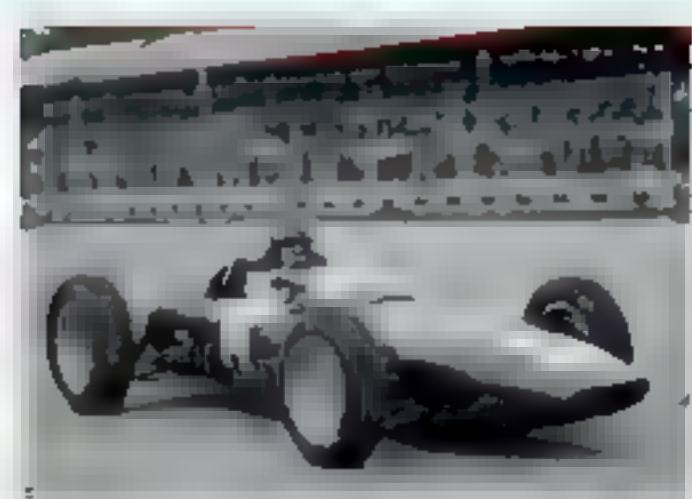


"When Pedro got killed, Jo took over as number one and was immediately quicker. It was obviously a difference for him; we didn't do anything different."

The Swiss underlined the point with his performance at the Austrian GP on the fast Osterreichring. In a season generally dominated by Stewart's Tyrrell, Siffert pipped the Scot to pole, and the two pulled clear of the rest in the early stages. Eventually the Tyrrell fell away as Stewart struggled with his front tyres. After 42 laps Siffert was 27.2s clear of Fittipaldi's Lotus. A rear tyre started deflating, but Siffert brought the P160 home to take victory by 4.1s.

He was a leading contender at the subsequent Italian GP slipstreaming epic too until gearbox issues slowed him. Gethin, who had only joined the team in Austria, stepped up to snatch victory in what was then the fastest F1 race. Howden Ganley finished fifth, just 0.61s behind Gethin, in another P160.

BRM'S WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP GP WINNERS



P57 Wins: 6
The car that delivered both the drivers' (Graham Hill) and constructors' titles to BRM. The V8-engined 1962 version battled Jim Clark's Lotus 25 and proved more reliable, even scoring a 1-2 in the Italian GP. In private hands, the P57 was still competing at the end of the 1500cc F1 era in 1965.



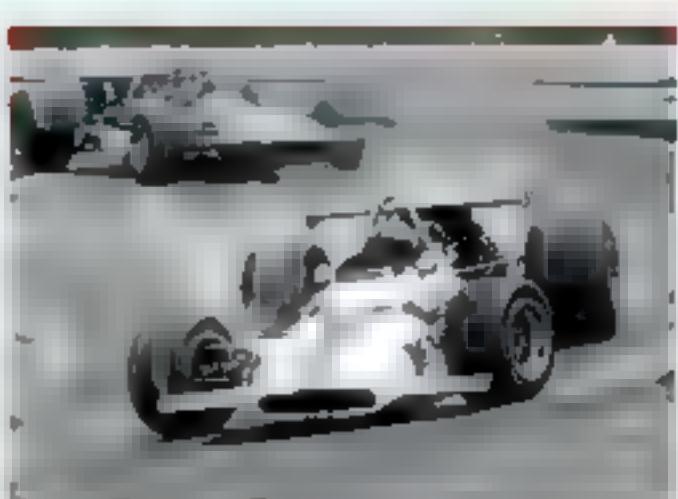
P261 Wins: 6
Arguably the classic BRM 1960s design, Tony Rudd's reliable P261 was good enough to take second in the constructors' contest in 1964 (to Ferrari) and 1965 (to Lotus). Jackie Stewart also took the two-litre version to the 1966 Tasman Cup crown and won that year's Monaco GP.



P160 Wins: 3
The P160 was the third fastest car of 1971, behind Tyrrell and Ferrari. Despite some unreliability and the death of lead driver Pedro Rodriguez, BRM took second in the table, and the P160B provided the team with its last success, courtesy of Jean-Pierre Beltoise at Monaco in 1972.



P25 Wins: 1
After years of unfulfilled promise, BRM finally scored its first world championship victory in the 1959 Dutch GP. Jo Bonnier took pole and was in the lead battle throughout in the P25, which had first appeared in 1955 and was one of the last competitive front-engined GP cars.



P153 Wins: 1
The machine that lifted BRM out of the doldrums following the H16 engine project. Graham Hill, Jackie Stewart and John Surtees had all been and gone, but a change of management heralded a revival. Pedro Rodriguez duly delivered the team's first victory for four years at the 1970 Belgian GP.



BRM IN 1970-71

1970 SOUTH AFRICAN GP

Pedro Rodriguez	9th
Jackie Oliver	R (gearbox)
George Eaton	R (engine)

1971 SOUTH AFRICAN GP

Pedro Rodriguez	R (overheating)
Jo Siffert	R (overheating)
Howden Ganley	R (engine)

1970 SPANISH GP

Pedro Rodriguez	Withdrawn
Jackie Oliver	R (accident)

1971 SPANISH GP

Pedro Rodriguez	4th
Jo Siffert	R (gearbox)
Howden Ganley	10th

1970 MONACO GP

Pedro Rodriguez	6th
Jackie Oliver	R (engine)

1971 MONACO GP

Pedro Rodriguez	9th
Jo Siffert	R (oil pipe)

1970 BELGIAN GP

Pedro Rodriguez	1st
Jackie Oliver	R (engine)

1971 BELGIAN GP

Pedro Rodriguez	2nd
Jo Siffert	6th
Howden Ganley	7th

1970 DUTCH GP

Pedro Rodriguez	10th
Jackie Oliver	R (engine)
George Eaton	R (oil leak)

1971 DUTCH GP

Pedro Rodriguez	R (ignition)
Jo Siffert	4th
Howden Ganley	10th

1970 FRENCH GP

Pedro Rodriguez	R (gearbox)
Jackie Oliver	R (engine)
George Eaton	12th

1971 FRENCH GP

Pedro Rodriguez	R (ignition)
Jo Siffert	4th
Howden Ganley	10th

1970 BRITISH GP

Pedro Rodriguez	R (accident)
Jackie Oliver	R (engine)
George Eaton	R (oil pressure)

1971 BRITISH GP

Jo Siffert	9th
Howden Ganley	8th

1970 GERMAN GP

Pedro Rodriguez	R (ignition)
Jackie Oliver	R (engine)

1971 GERMAN GP

Jo Siffert	EX
Howden Ganley	R (engine)
Vic Elford	11th

1970 AUSTRIAN GP

Pedro Rodriguez	4th
Jackie Oliver	5th
George Eaton	11th

1971 AUSTRIAN GP

Jo Siffert	1st
Howden Ganley	R (engine)
Peter Gethin	10th

1970 ITALIAN GP

Pedro Rodriguez	R (engine)
Jackie Oliver	R (engine)
George Eaton	R (overheating)

1971 ITALIAN GP

Peter Gethin	1st
Helmut Marko	R (engine)

1970 CANADIAN GP

Pedro Rodriguez	4th
Jackie Oliver	NC
George Eaton	10th

1971 CANADIAN GP

Jo Siffert	9th
Peter Gethin	14th
George Eaton	15th

1970 UNITED STATES GP

Pedro Rodriguez	2nd
Jackie Oliver	R (engine)
George Eaton	R (engine)

1971 UNITED STATES GP

Jo Siffert	2nd
Howden Ganley	4th
Peter Gethin	9th

1970 MEXICAN GP

Pedro Rodriguez	6th
Jackie Oliver	7th

1971 MEXICAN GP

John Cannon	14th
Final 1970-71 tally: three wins, one pole and one fastest lap.	

It was a sad end for a team that had experienced a tumultuous life from its earliest days and had won 17 world championship GPs, but at least the 1970-71 campaigns had provided one last hurrah. ■



PUMA: CAN IT BRING M-SPORT AND FORD BACK TO THE WRC SUMMIT?

M-Sport has become the first to unveil its new-for-2022 hybrid rally car. And Ford has upped its support for the Puma Rally1 challenger in its bid for glory

TOM HOWARD



This is arguably the most important challenger to ever come off the M-Sport production line. There's a lot riding on the Cumbrian firm's latest creation, far more to the Ford Puma hybrid Rally1 car than simply a bid to bring the team and manufacturer back to the top of the World Rally Championship.

The WRC's decision to adopt hybrid technology from 2022 has thrown teams a new challenge: to construct all-new, tougher, safer and faster cars, powered by a 1.6-litre internal combustion engine coupled to a Compact Dynamics-built 100kW hybrid system. Under the new rules, hybrid power is expected to be used in every stage next year, as well as on road sections between tests. This new era for rallying has arrived to ensure the championship remains relevant and in line with current automotive trends, and provide a platform to attract new manufacturers to the sport.

While the rules are yet to lure a new marque, they have reinvigorated Ford, resulting in it stepping up its support



M-Sport won manufacturers' crown and Ogier the drivers' title in 2017



It's important for the sport to move forward with hybrid technology, says Millener

"WITHOUT FORD, WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DO THIS CAR IN TERMS OF TECH, INTEGRATION, TESTING"

of the M-Sport WRC programme through the development of its new hybrid contender. And so, after 18 months of work, the all-new Puma was born.

Such is the importance of these new rules and Ford's support that M-Sport threatened to walk away from the WRC next year if the regulations were pushed back to 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The reason was that Ford's support is crucial to the operation, as it remains a semi-works squad competing against the might of full factory efforts from Hyundai and Toyota. That's a battle made tougher in difficult economic times caused by coronavirus and which led to redundancies at M-Sport last year.

To further outline the importance of the Puma, Malcolm Wilson's WRC powerhouse has openly admitted that its main focus this season is on developing its hybrid challenger for next year's assault on the championship. "Without the hybrid, we wouldn't be in a position to be able to go forward," says M-Sport team principal Richard Millener. "That was one of the key criteria for Ford, and I think it's important for the sport that we move forward. Without them [Ford], quite simply we would not be able to do this car in terms of tech, integration of hybrid, testing of hybrid; it's impossible without them."

For M-Sport, it could provide a turning point after a slump in results since winning the 2017 manufacturers' crown and back-to-back drivers' titles in 2017 and 2018 with Sébastien Ogier. The first of those years, of course, was when the WRC ushered in the existing regulations. But since that purple patch it has slipped behind rivals Toyota and Hyundai in the WRC pecking order, its last podium coming in March 2020 when Teemu Suninen finished third in Mexico.

M-Sport has produced its fair share of world-beaters, from the >>



Hybrid boost is countered by extra weight, but Puma Rally1 remains fun to drive

RISING STAR FOURMAUX'S VIEW

M-Sport's WRC rising star Adrien Fourmaux is one of the lucky few to have sampled the new Ford Puma, and has played a significant role in its development alongside the team's test driver Matthew Wilson. The pair have been sharing the initial development car through numerous tests, and will continue to do so as the team looks to use its allocated 30 test days before the car's all-important debut on next January's Monte Carlo Rally.

While Fourmaux has limited WRC experience – he has enjoyed a meteoric rise to the sport's top tier in four years – he says that driving the Puma hybrid is an altogether different challenge compared to

his M-Sport Fiesta. "The difference is you have an extra boost with the hybrid," states Fourmaux. "The power with the engine is quite similar to the current car, but the car is heavier because we have

the extra batteries and the hybrid system.

"When you have the boost you have a big bit of extra power, it's really good. We don't have it constantly, we have to wait and let it regenerate, but

it's a new challenge. You can really feel that you have more power than the current car on the straights, and sometimes you feel it's less because of the extra weight. There are a lot of different things but it's

still enjoyable to drive."

Expected to be part of M-Sport's WRC attack next year, Fourmaux believes the new hybrid Rally1 cars will prove to be an exciting prospect, while also motivating teams to strive to master the new regulations.

On the driving front, managing the use of hybrid on every stage through a myriad of software maps and navigating the road sections on battery power alone could become a key part in a successful championship bid. "Next year will be exciting not only for the drivers but the spectators," he adds. "It will be really interesting and it's a new challenge for all the teams to understand how it works. It gives good motivation for everyone."

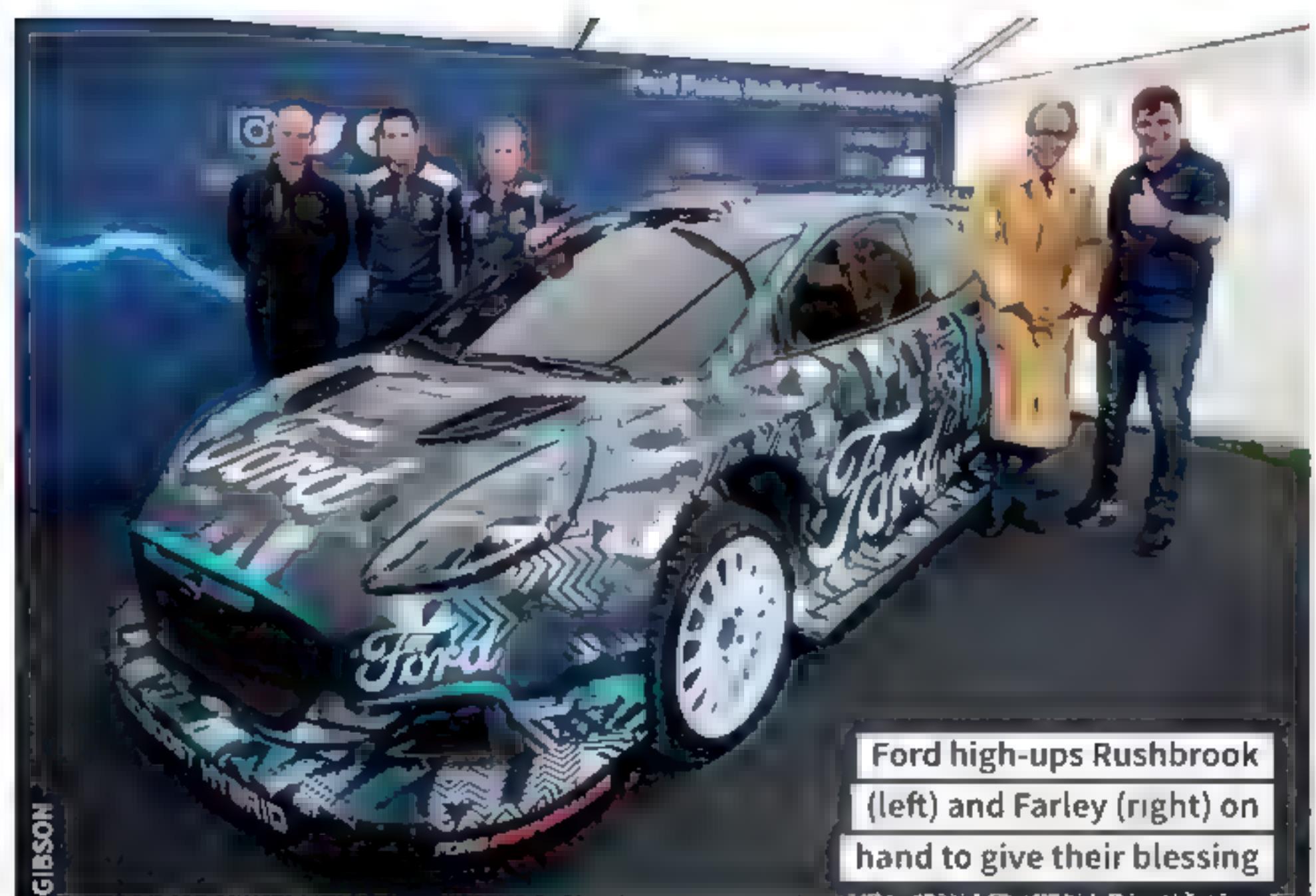


"M-SPORT HAS ALWAYS BEEN VERY GOOD AT DEVELOPING NEW CARS AND WE EXPECT THE SAME WITH THIS CASE"

Ford Focus that burst onto the scene in 1999 with Colin McRae to the latest Fiesta, but the Puma is an all-new challenge. It's a huge undertaking to build an all-new rally car, and that's a task made even more complicated by the adoption of hybrid technology, a feat that simply couldn't be achieved without Ford's expertise and resources in the US. Thanks to Ford's support and a huge effort from the team, M-Sport became the first to reveal its hybrid Rally1 car, with the Puma launched at the Goodwood Festival of Speed last month. And if anyone was doubting Ford's support behind this project, its CEO Jim Farley and head of Ford Performance Mark Rushbrook made the trip from the US to witness the launch – in the middle of a pandemic, no less.

"Certainly it's the most input that we have ever had in any of the new cars we've done in the past," says M-Sport boss Malcolm Wilson. "To get that technical support in areas where we don't have that equipment and knowledge has been absolutely invaluable."

"M-Sport has always been very good at developing new cars and we expect the same with this case," Rushbrook explains. "But with the new technology with hybrid, we are able to bring in some of our calibration engineers to help with the software strategy, and also aerodynamics and vehicle dynamics simulation are other areas we can contribute to the new car." Ford's presence at the launch could be interpreted as it weighing up the possibility of returning as a fully blown manufacturer entry, as it was through M-Sport from 1999 to 2012. But such talk has been hosed down by both parties, with Rushbrook saying "certainly we have increased our support



Ford high-ups Rushbrook (left) and Farley (right) on hand to give their blessing

with the development of the new car and being as engaged as we are."

The results from testing have been promising, leading to an air of confidence that the Puma will be competitive from the outset when the new-look WRC begins at the Monte Carlo Rally in January next year. Historically, too, M-Sport has reason to be confident. After all, it dominated when the current ruleset was introduced in 2017. But it's under no illusions about the task ahead, with plenty more tests – the latest on Finland's high-speed gravel roads just last week – required to ensure the Puma is ready to tackle everything the WRC can throw at it.

"I'm very confident, with the support that Ford and the guys have done here, that we're not going to lose that edge we've had when we've brought new cars out," says Wilson. "I'm pretty confident that we're going to be very competitive right from the first event. Honestly it reminds me very much of the 2017 car in a sense, but of course there's the added excitement of the hybrid aspect, which has been a great new challenge for all the team here. Monte Carlo is definitely going to be a difficult challenge given the format. There's no midday service, which will be a first, and Monte Carlo being Monte Carlo, it's a very difficult rally, so that in itself is going to present a new challenge."

Perhaps the most important contributing factor to the Puma's performance on the stages will be who's driving it. M-Sport is hoping to increase its current WRC attack from two to three entries, but is yet to formally confirm drivers for any of its vacant seats. Hyundai duo Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak, and Toyota pair Elfyn Evans and Kalle Rovanpera, are set to remain at their current teams in 2022, while seven-time world champion Ogier is expected to stay with Toyota, albeit for a partial campaign. So the big names are off the shelf.

Talks have been held with several candidates, but the team has also stated that it would be happy to retain its current line-up of French rising star Adrien Fourmaux, Briton Gus Greensmith and Finn Suninen. Fourmaux is all but certain to stay given that the 26-year-old is highly rated in the WRC and has played a crucial role in the development of the Puma. "I think at the end of the day it's like any motorsport: the driver is still a vital ingredient and of course everybody knows basically all the top guys are staying where they are," Wilson adds. "So that makes it a little bit more difficult, but I do honestly feel we will still be able to present a strong case come the start of next year, just because I'm so impressed with everything that has been done. I've watched and analysed some of the testing and it gives me a lot of confidence."

"The only one that is close to definite at the moment is Adrien. In an ideal world if we can get everything pulled together then we would like to try and run three cars, but I'm not in a position at the moment to say we have definitely got Adrien in place. The other ones will fall into line in the next couple of months."

Driver line-up aside, when Ford throws its might behind a rally programme it rarely fails. Can it continue that with the Puma?



Up and coming French driver Fourmaux is all but certain to stay on board



Wilson is confident M-Sport will maintain its new-car edge

MCKEIN

HILL CLIMBS THE MOUNTAIN

It's been a tough road to the top of the BTCC for Jake Hill. Now he's a title contender, accomplished historic racer and in-demand coach.

It's a great life for this motorsport junkie

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport
IMAGES

“**T**he brutal truth of it is that I just love race cars. I think that shows with all the historic stuff that I drive. I drive so many cars and I just bloody love them all. It's great. It doesn't matter what I get in, it always puts a massive smile on my face. At the end of every year, I look back at the cars that are new to me that I've driven, and I just think, 'Wow — I grew up watching those cars.'

That's Jake Hill, the 27-year-old who's very much in the thick of the British Touring Car Championship title fight with the Ford Focus fielded by the Motorbase Performance/MB Motorsport liaison. But as the bubbly Kentishman has just detailed, that's far from the only string to his bow. To describe Hill merely as a BTCC frontrunner is to credit Paul McCartney with being a decent bass player.

Apart from the Ford, Hill has this year raced Chevron B26, Ford Mustang, Lotus Elan, whizzed a Group A Nissan Skyline up the hill at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, and started the test and development work on a Panoz LMP1 car. When Autosport catches up with him on the phone, he's driving home from Snetterton after a day coaching a Ginetta GT5 Challenge team. Such is the itinerary of the UK-based driver trying to make a living in the modern era.

"Being totally honest, I don't earn anything out of British touring cars," he admits. "Ultimately, in terms of how I earn my living out of motorsport, it's the historic stuff and the driver coaching." Yet it's the BTCC that has put him in a shop window to do that: "Touring cars is a big commercial business and it takes an awful lot of money to make that world go round, and we're in a time when the manufacturers aren't involved like they were. But it's thanks to touring cars that I've done pretty much all the historic stuff."

That's all taken off in the past three years, where a tough decision was made by Hill in mid-2018 to put his BTCC career on hold. To flash back further, we need some context: Hill's motorsport-mad family, while of average wealth by society standards, is at the destitute end of the racing spectrum. Father Simon networked and cajoled his way to a respectable driving career from the late 1980s to the new millennium, then turned his attentions to his son. From a stop-start karting career, via a lack-of-finance-punctuated Ginetta stint and a small handful of BTCC cameos, Hill Jr landed in touring cars full-time with Team Hard in 2016, thanks to nothing more than his searing speed, scrimping and saving and the faith of those around him. After flashes of form, it turned sour at the 2018





Croft round, by which time he'd lost faith in the ageing Volkswagen CC he was driving.

"It was arguably my worst and toughest era of my racing career," reflects Hill. "Me and dad had worked our nuts off to be where we are, especially dad. And so for me to turn round at Croft in 2018 and say that I'd rather never race again than have to do another race in that car, that is a very tough statement to take from dad's perspective, because I was just hating it that much. I just wanted to stop, forget about it all, and just see what happened."

Hill had enjoyed a BTCC one-off in 2015 with the Audi S3 of AmD Tuning, whose boss Shaun Hollamby was a mate of his dad's since their late-1980s days as aspiring racers: "Shaun said, 'Right, let's try and do something for 2019', and at that time Dan Kirby and Trade Price Cars got involved with Shaun, took over the Audis and there was a bit of a ray of light." While TPC engaged AmD to run the Audis for 2019 and 2020, the AmD team proper was acquiring the ex-Eurotech FK2-spec Honda Civic Type Rs. Rory Butcher stayed on, joined by Sam Tordoff, to race the Civics; Hill was paired with ex-F1 racer Mark Blundell in the Audis.

Hill continues: "Honestly, it was the best fun year I've had racing

in a long time. I absolutely loved it because I was in a really happy place, I was surrounded by good people, and I really enjoyed going racing again. And I think that showed, because my racecraft improved massively, my driving improved massively, and we ended up getting a couple of podiums and a win. And that kickstarted the rollercoaster that we're on now."

Sure enough, for 2020 Hill was 'upgraded' to the Civic, with

"I JUST LOVE RACE CARS. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT I GET IN, IT ALWAYS PUTS A SMILE ON MY FACE"

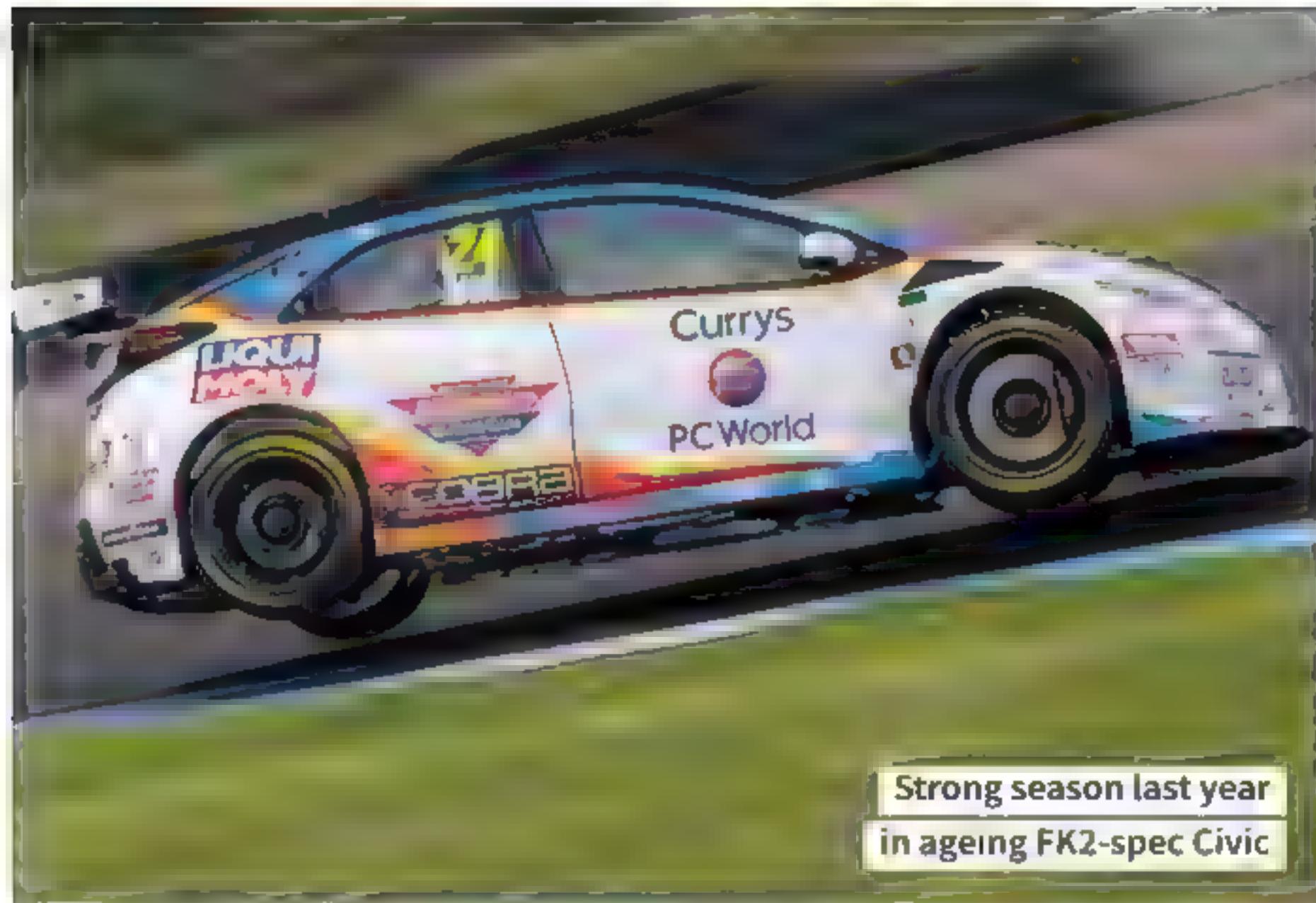
the AmD squad rebranded MB Motorsport as part of a commercial tie-up with Blundell, who had hung up his helmet. He claimed seventh in the championship, and last October Hollamby confirmed that Hill would remain an MB driver for 2021 – but at the same time he was negotiating to buy Motorbase in partnership with Pete Osborne, father of Hill's 2020 team-mate Sam Osborne. That was accomplished, the AmD/MB staff effectively merged with Motorbase, and Hill and Motorbase incumbent Ollie Jackson were named as the 2021 MB drivers, with Osborne Jr and Andy Neate representing the sister Motorbase squad. Hollamby left the partnership before the start of the season, but Hill has led the combo and currently lies just 23 points adrift of championship leader Ash Sutton.

"It's the first brand-new car I've had since 2010 Ginetta Juniors [when they upgraded to the G40]!" laughs Hill, who was given Motorbase's new-build Focus as it expanded from three cars to four. "It was an incredible opportunity. Ultimately, I still owe a lot of thanks to Shaun and Pete Osborne."

Hill acknowledges that his form, which carried him to the BTCC points lead after the Thruxton opener thanks to a hat-trick of >>

Hill is fourth in points and in contention for 2021 BTCC title





podium finishes, owes a lot to his engineer Craig Pawley, who has transferred with him from the Civic: "Craig was arguably the best engineer in the Civic FK2's history, I'd suggest. All right, Dynamics had a lot to do with it to begin with, but what Craig did in the latter years with Eurotech and then obviously with myself in 2020, he really understood the car. And being a suspension technician at Red Bull F1, he understands suspension very well, and the biggest part of a BTCC car really is suspension and the geometry that goes into it."

"I really do feel like I have one of, if not the best, engineer on the grid, with a front-wheel-drive car at least, and what Craig has brought to the party is undeniably a massive reason why we're as fast as we are. He's done a fantastic job in adapting the Focus shell to what was effectively our set-up that we ended with on the Civic. There's been a few tweaks – the engineers at Motorbase, specifically James Mundy who designed the car, they've gelled really well with Craig and accepted him into the engineering family, and hopefully vice versa. The team have great ideas, and Craig has listened to what worked last year with the car in Rory [who led the team in 2020] and Ollie's hands, and we've ended up with a halfway house now set-up wise, a mixture of Honda and Ford. Every round we go to the car is just getting better and better from small tweaks that we're learning."

Remarkably, Hill's only BTCC race win to date remains that 2019 triumph in the Audi, from a reversed-grid start at Knockhill. That's in large part down to the increased 2021 levels of success ballast turning the championship into a softly-softly affair, and his pace in the Honda in 2020 and the Ford this term putting him into disadvantageous positions on the reversed grid. Noticeably, Hill has qualified the Ford very well this season compared to the others on heavy ballast.

"We made a big conscious effort in the winter that when we go testing we always carry 75 kilos because ultimately, if we do our job right, the car will always have weight in it after round one," Hill recounts. "If you can make the car as fast as you can with that weight, then anything less is going to be a bonus. As you can see from the standings, we're doing a fairly decent job of starting to manage it quite well. The thing that's let us down – and to be honest we could be leading it, if not just behind Ash – is the two tyre problems: the puncture that stopped us getting on the podium or even winning race two at Brands; and the tyre delamination that we had due to set-up at Snetterton."

"One of our main objectives is, OK, we may not be on the podium at every round, and we may not even win a race, but really does that matter if you bring home that big shiny pot at the end of the year? That is my endgame: win the BTCC; win my first ever championship in anything; and get the job done. We're just trying to be as consistent as we can, and bring the best car we can to every round, and not get caught up in the crap [shunts], and that's hopefully what we're managing to do."

One bugbear to which Hill has alluded has been the Ford's form

on the soft-spec Goodyear. Before the latest fourth-generation Focus appeared in 2020, Motorbase struggled to switch the tyres on. The new car was a big step forward in responsiveness, but punctured even the mediums (with the softs never used in the COVID-influenced campaign). This year, the softs are used as the option tyre at Snetterton, Oulton Park and next month at Croft, and as the prime this weekend at Knockhill. "It's a really good tyre [the soft], but the Focus doesn't seem to enjoy it quite so much, and we've really had to work hard on it," muses Hill. "Although the weather wasn't perfect, the Oulton test [last month] came at a perfect time and we managed to get our heads around it a lot more – not perfect, but I think it's good enough to get the job done, and every time we use it we gain more and more data."

And then there are his outings in historics. It means a lot to Hill, who like his dad is a massive motorsport anorak (of there being a Scalextric model of his old Team Hard BTCC car, and the upcoming release of the MB Honda, he exclaims: "I was absolutely over the moon. I grew up playing Scalextric, my dad did, my uncle did, and so many of my mates' dads did. When I was growing up it was, 'Can you imagine having your own car?' It's a really cool thing to see your name on your British touring car in Hamley's in London!).

"Ultimately, if and when my touring car career comes to an end, or I decide to divert, I really want to do the Le Mans 24 Hours," he continues. "It's pretty much any driver's dream, I guess, but that's a big aim for me. So to hear that John Danby Racing, the team that I do a lot of my historic stuff with, were getting hold of a Panoz... I first drove it at Donington and it was just out of this world. I'm testing it now probably once a month just to get it up to scratch, and every time you jump in it, it just makes you realise how lucky you are and how special a car it is that I'm getting the privilege to set up and hopefully race next year."

"And the Skyline stuff with Ric Wood... I'm a massive Skyline fan anyway [Hill drives an R32 on the road], my favourite motorsport is Japanese Touring Cars from the nineties, so to be able to drive the Calsonic and HKS Skyline, that is just 'wow'. It was quite an honour, because after the Festival of Speed Ric had contact from HKS Japan, and they were interested in the car and who the driver was. The chance to go and race in Japan would mean an awful lot to me."

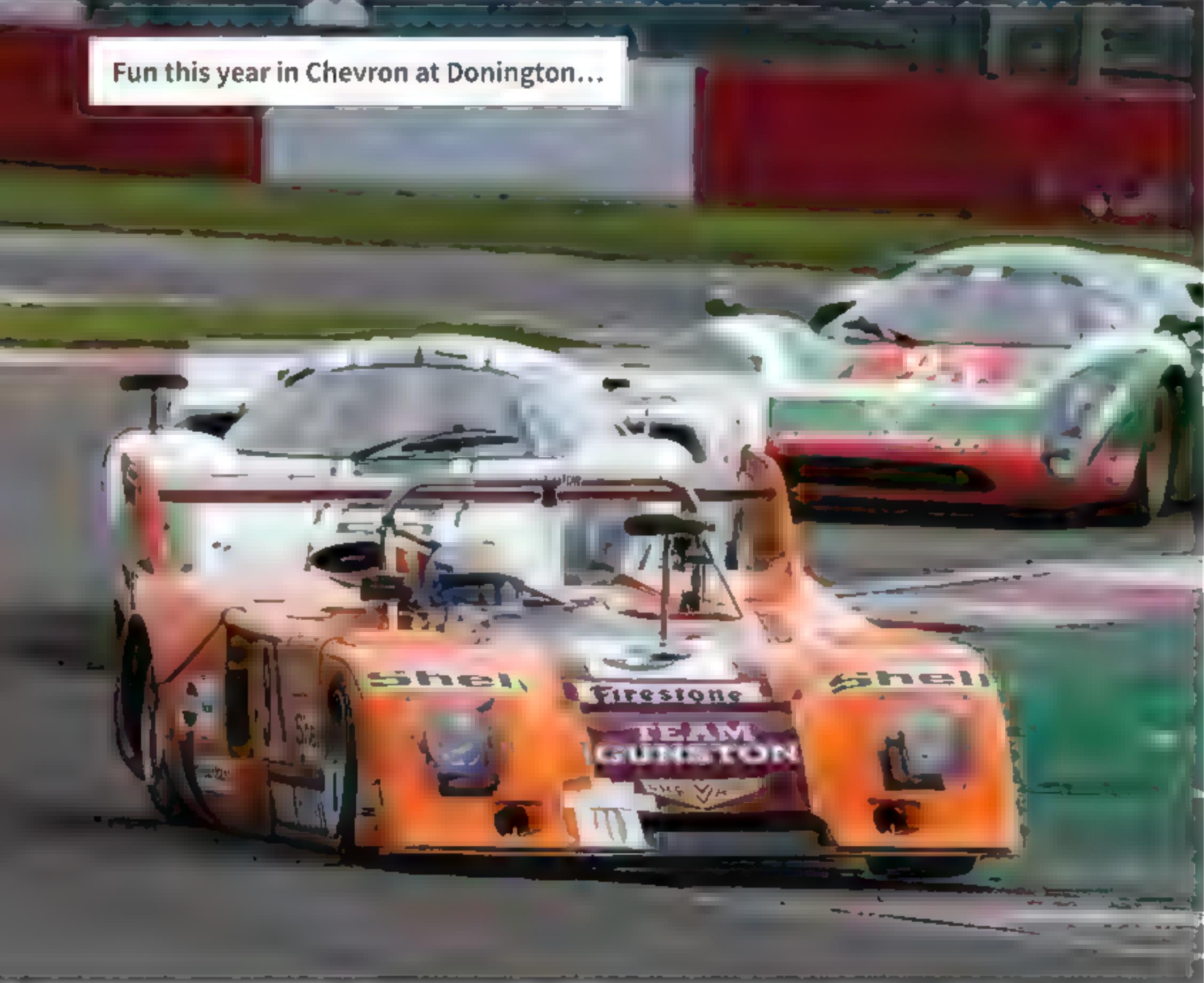
"WE MIGHT NOT EVEN WIN A RACE BUT DOES THAT MATTER IF YOU BRING HOME THAT BIG SHINY POT?"

Ironically, the historic world opened up thanks to Hill's split with Team Hard: "Richard Wheeler, who was one of my original sponsors and is still a good friend, owns the Lotus Elan with which I won at the Silverstone Classic in 2018, and if it wasn't for me leaving Team Hard and then driving for Richard at the Classic, let's be honest, my historic career probably wouldn't have kicked off."

Apart from all that, you can find Hill hustling a humble 1983 Volkswagen Golf Mk2 on occasional Classic Sports Car Club weekends, the car owned by Racetruck boss Ian Knight, one of his backers. "It's just such a great fun weekend of racing," he enthuses.

But for now the biggest task is to continue to fight for that BTCC crown for Motorbase and MB. The combination is rounding what was a rough-diamond Hill package, enforced by perennial lack of funding, into a complete contender, both on-track and off. Hill credits Blundell with helping "with so many other things surrounding the commercial world, with helping my sponsors out or giving us some really good advice, and just being in my eyes a really good team manager".

Has he brought Hill into his management stable? "No... Not yet. But I'd like to think that it's not off the cards." And if that came to pass, the biggest task would likely be diary-management, such is his enthusiasm for anything on four wheels. *



Herta stars and dominates but Ericsson wins

INDYCAR SERIES
NASHVILLE (USA)
8 AUGUST
ROUND 9/14

To say that a Marcus Ericsson victory seemed unlikely going into last Sunday's inaugural IndyCar race on the streets of Nashville would be to underestimate the facts.

The Detroit race winner had looked fast in practice, like Chip Ganassi Racing team-mates Alex Palou and Scott Dixon, but clipping a wall in the first segment of qualifying had left him 18th on the grid. And besides, no one looked capable of beating the Andretti Autosport Dallara-Honda of Colton Herta.

Such was the 21-year-old Californian's pace advantage around this new 11-turn, 2.17-mile course that he was able to run hard primary Firestones in the first segment of qualifying, leaving him a fresh set of softer 'reds' for the Fast Six shootout. That enabled him to land his sixth pole position by over half a second from Dixon.

Tight windows for a two-stop race, allowing less likelihood of one of Herta's pursuers stopping substantially earlier and getting a chance to vault to the front should caution flags come out, meant the #26 team appeared to have a strong chance of devastating the field. But that was not counting on multiple cautions slowing the pack and allowing everyone to get creative with strategy.

The race was started on the return leg of the bridge: the start and finish line, as at Mid-Ohio, are different because the front straight is too short to accommodate 27



Ericsson had incidents in qualifying and the race but still won

starters in grid formation and adequately spaced, and Herta took the lead ahead of Alexander Rossi, who outbraked Dixon.

At the end of lap one, the caution flew for Dalton Kellett's car stopped and stalled on course. Then, as Herta led them to the green for the first restart (held on the short front straight), Ericsson smacked into the back of Sébastien Bourdais, was launched upwards, then crashed back down with his broken front wing tucked under the front wheels, causing Ericsson to strike a wall as he limped to the pits. The team didn't lose a lap as they fitted a new nose wing to the Honda-powered car, but Ericsson would have to serve a stop/go penalty for avoidable contact, and so rejoined 25th and a considerable way behind the field.

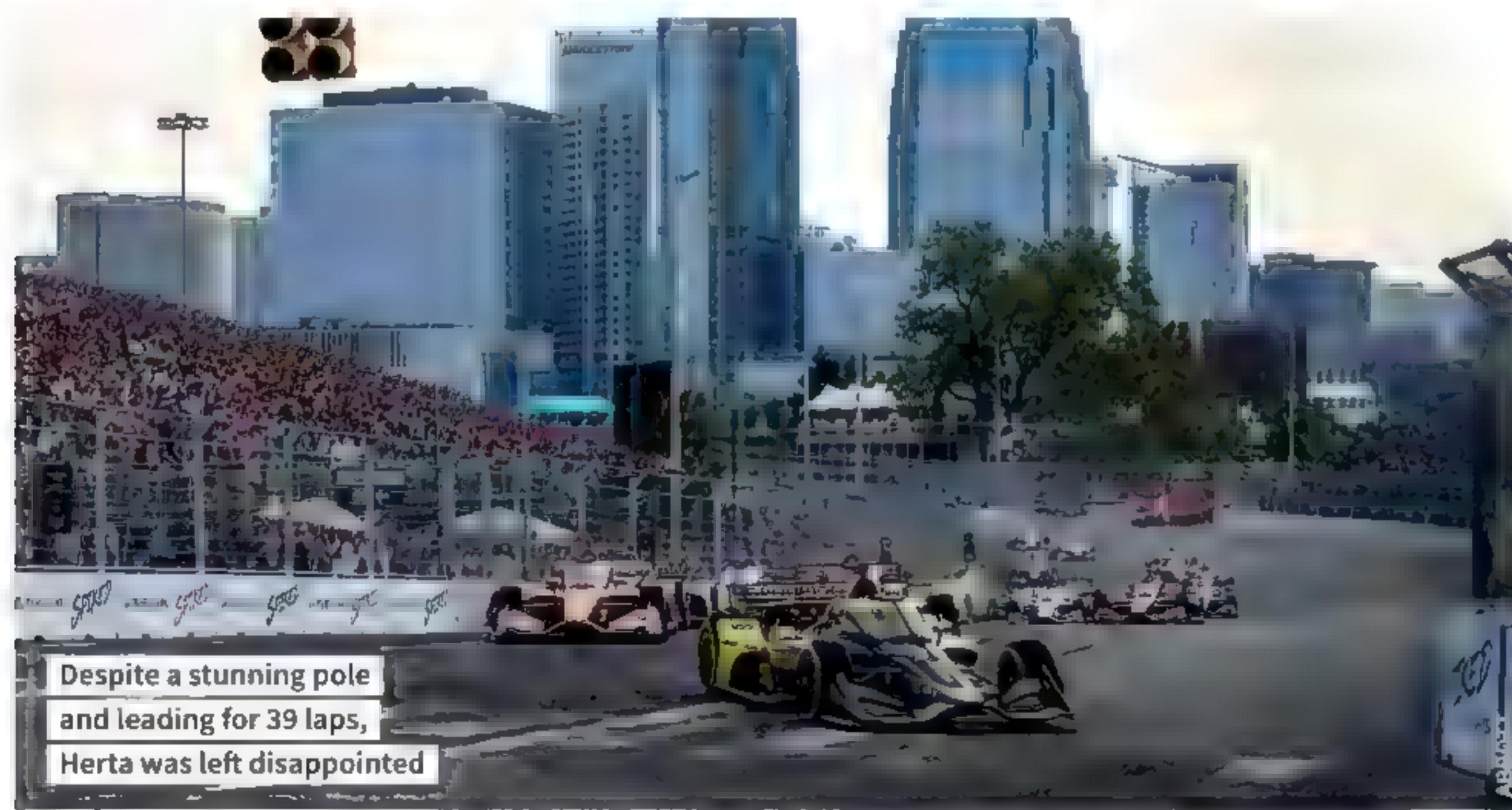
He'd have to wait only until lap 16 to catch back up, as Ed Jones tipped Scott McLaughlin into a spin, and the Penske driver was unable to get going without

assistance, bringing out the third caution. Some drivers pitted at this point, enabling Ericsson to reach 19th. At the next restart, Will Power dived inside Penske team-mate Simon Pagenaud for eighth place, but the Frenchman ended up nosing into the Turn 11 tyre wall, creating an 11-car jam that brought out the red flag.

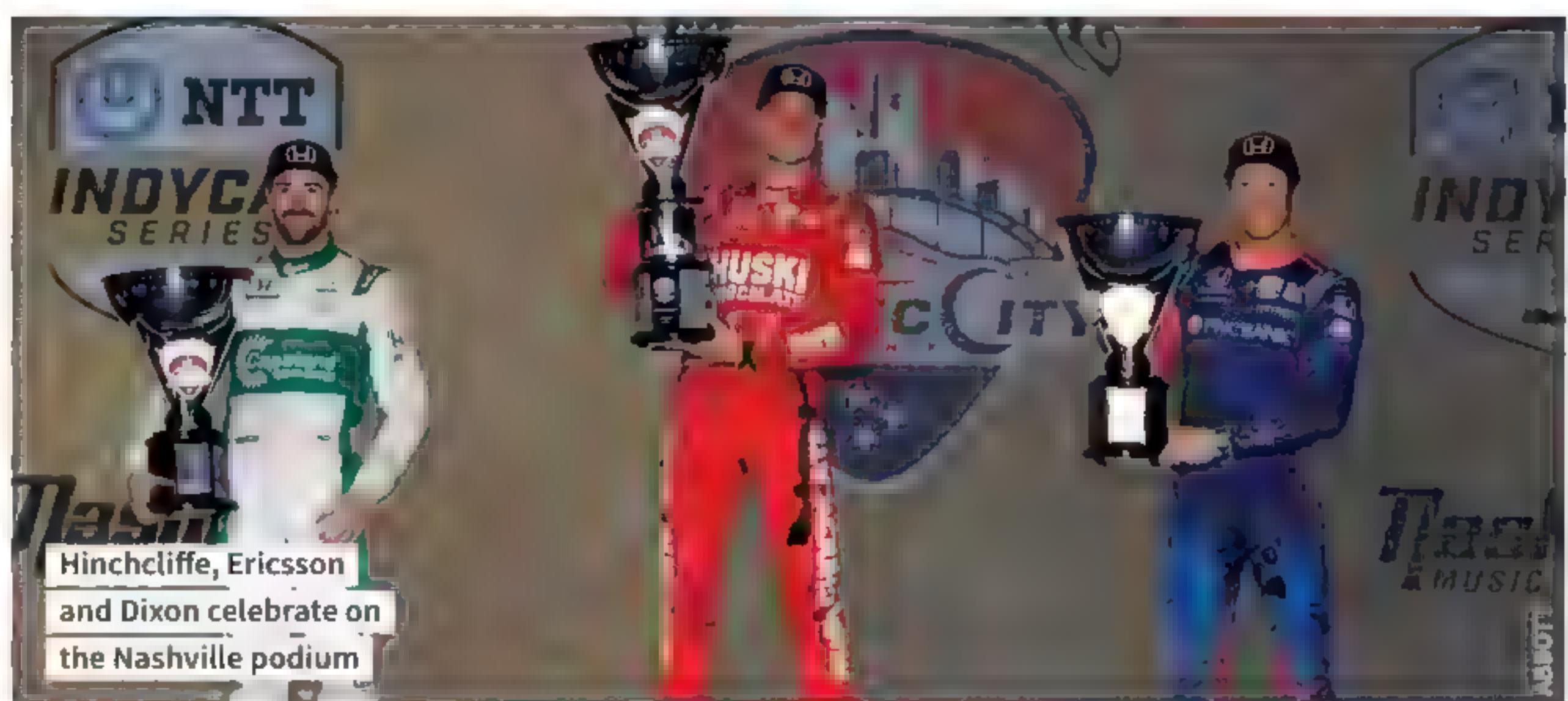
Ericsson, who had tiptoed through this mess up to 12th, reached 10th on the restart and, now firmly off-sequence, went into the lead under the next caution (on lap 31, caused by Rinus VeeKay stalling at Turn 1) as Herta led Rossi, Dixon and more into the pits. Such was the reduced speed of the pace car while VeeKay was retrieved, and the shortness of pitlane, that Herta was able to rejoin in fourth, which within two laps he'd converted to second place after dismissing team-mates James Hinchcliffe and the electronics-troubled Ryan Hunter-Reay. But he didn't take the lead until Ericsson pitted under the laps 41-46 caution (Power had spun McLaughlin to a standstill and the Kiwi was collected by Kellett).

Seven laps later and under a seventh caution (O'Ward/Rossi coming together), Herta made his second and final stop and emerged ninth. On the restart he dismissed Graham Rahal and Cody Ware, who soon spun, bringing out the eighth caution. After this, Herta zapped Felix Rosenqvist, Hunter-Reay and Hinchcliffe on consecutive laps, and took just two laps more to outbrake Dixon to claim second.

Ericsson was much harder to crack, despite having made his final stop seven laps earlier than Herta and therefore now needing to save fuel while running older tyres. The Ganassi driver stymied Herta's



Despite a stunning pole and leading for 39 laps, Herta was left disappointed



RESULTS ROUND 9/14, NASHVILLE (USA), 8 AUGUST (80 LAPS - 168.000 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Marcus Ericsson (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	2h18m49.8305s
2	Scott Dixon (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	+1.5596s
3	James Hinchcliffe (CAN)	Andretti Steinbrenner Autosport/Dallara-Honda	+2.3918s
4	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport/Dallara-Honda	+2.8015s
5	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/Dallara-Honda	+4.0833s
6	Ed Jones (ARE)	Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser Sullivan/Dallara-Honda	+4.7715s
7	Alex Palou (ESP)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	+5.5333s
8	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Arrow McLaren SP/Dallara-Chevrolet	+5.9667s
9	Helio Castroneves (BRA)	Meyer Shank Racing/Dallara-Honda	+6.7874s
10	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	+7.5286s
11	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/Dallara-Honda	+8.4929s
12	Conor Daly (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing/Dallara-Chevrolet	+8.8320s
13	Pato O'Ward (MEX)	Arrow McLaren SP/Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.1207s
14	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.5956s
15	Jack Harvey (GBR)	Meyer Shank Racing/Dallara-Honda	+11.0919s
16	Romain Grosjean (FRA)	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR/Dallara-Honda	+12.2761s
17	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Andretti Autosport/Dallara-Honda	+16.5295s
18	Max Chilton (GBR)	Carlin/Dallara-Chevrolet	+24.8453s
19	Colton Herta (USA)	Andretti Autosport with Curb-Agajanian/Dallara-Honda	74 laps-accident
20	Cody Ware (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with RWR/Dallara-Honda	70 laps-spin
21	Simon Pagenaud (FRA)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	68 laps-accident damage
22	Scott McLaughlin (NZL)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	-13 laps
23	Dalton Kellett (CAN)	AJ Foyt Enterprises/Dallara-Chevrolet	37 laps-accident
24	Rinus van Kalmthout (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing/Dallara-Chevrolet	24 laps-accident
25	Takuma Sato (JPN)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/Dallara-Honda	19 laps-accident
26	Jimmie Johnson (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	18 laps-accident
27	Sebastien Bourdais (FRA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises/Dallara-Chevrolet	5 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 72.607mph. Fastest lap Herta 1m16.3064s, 99.074mph.

Q3 1 Herta 1m13.6835s; **2** Dixon 1m14.2327s; **3** Rossi 1m14.6646s; **4** Rosenqvist 1m15.0045s; **5** Grosjean 1m15.3980s; **9** Palou 1m14.6316s*. **Q2** Palou 1m14.4578s; Rossi 1m14.5252s; Herta 1m14.7232s; Dixon 1m14.8394s; Rosenqvist 1m14.8476s; Grosjean 1m15.0078s; **6** Harvey 1m15.1309s; **7** Pagenaud 1m15.1354s; **8** O'Ward 1m15.1914s; **10** Hinchcliffe 1m15.3255s; **11** Power 1m15.5016s; **12** Newgarden 1m15.5062s. * Six-place penalty for engine change. **Q1 - GROUP 1** Palou 1m15.3385s, Rossi 1m15.3721s; O'Ward 1m15.4160s; Rosenqvist 1m15.5305s; Newgarden 1m15.5474s; Power 1m15.6309s; **13** Rahal 1m16.1097s; **15** Castroneves 1m16.3479s; **17** Ferrucci 1m16.4647s; **19** Kellett 1m17.1516s; **21** Chilton 1m17.5553s; **23** McLaughlin 1m18.1899s; **25** Johnson no time. **Q1 - GROUP 2** Dixon 1m14.6673s; Herta 1m14.7067s; Harvey 1m15.2585s; Hinchcliffe 1m15.2646s; Pagenaud 1m15.3661s; Grosjean 1m15.3730s; **14** Hunter-Reay 1m15.4984s; **16** Bourdais 1m15.6055s; **18** Ericsson 1m15.6379s; **20** Daly 1m15.6685s; **22** van Kalmthout 1m15.7029s; **24** Sato 1m15.8503s; **26** Jones 1m15.8770s; **27** Ware 1m18.0928s. **CHAMPIONSHIP** **1** Palou 410; **2** Dixon 368; **3** O'Ward 362; **4** Newgarden 335; **5** Ericsson 331; **6** Rahal 286; **7** Pagenaud 280; **8** Herta 275; **9** van Kalmthout 263; **10** Sato 231.



huge pace through Turns 3 and 8 – the two corners leading onto the bridge – by backing off, then briefly hitting his push-to-pass boost and using his red rubber (Herta was on primaries) to gain better traction. That gave him enough breathing room to coast into Turns 4 and 9 to save fuel, while Herta tried to regain the deficit by staying on the power longer and braking later.

With 12 laps to go, Herta came an inch away from understeering into the wall on the exit of Turn 9. And on lap 75 of 80 at the same turn, he locked up his left-front wheel and hit the wall hard. Again the race was neutralised to clear up the mess.

The yellow-flag laps helped ease Ericsson's fuel situation, and so on the restart all he needed to do was hold off Dixon, who had been running the same set of tyres since lap 46 and was content with second on a day when points leader Palou could salvage only seventh.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ



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Nasr and Derani earn Road America spoils

**IMSA SPORTSCAR
ROAD AMERICA (USA)
8 AUGUST
ROUND 8/12**

Felipe Nasr and Pipo Derani combined to score an emphatic IMSA SportsCar victory last Sunday aboard their Action Express Racing Cadillac DPi-V.R at the classic Road America venue in rural Wisconsin.

Nasr made light work of treacherous wet conditions in qualifying to claim pole by 0.8 seconds, and stamped his authority on the 2h40m race.

A strategic ploy by the Meyer Shank Racing Acura team meant Olivier Pla and Dane Cameron were out in front for much of the second half of the race. But their hopes were pinned on the arrival of more inclement weather, which had been forecast to strike during the final stages. When that failed to materialise, Cameron

required an extra pitstop for a splash of fuel with just seven minutes remaining. The American was able to resume in fourth, ahead of Wayne Taylor Racing's similar Acura ARX-05, driven by Rick Taylor and Filipe Albuquerque, but Cameron slowed on the final lap to allow the Portuguese past and ensure he was able to gain an extra 20 points for WTR in the team's quest for the championship.

The late switch means that Taylor/Albuquerque now lead Nasr/Derani by 41 points (2380 plays 2339) in the revised-for-2021 scoring system, with just three Daytona Prototype international races remaining.

Nasr/Derani took the chequered flag 1.6s clear of the Multimatic Motorsports Mazda RT24-P of Oliver Jarvis/Harry Tincknell, who slipped to third in the points table, just two behind Nasr/Derani.

"The race started pretty well," said Nasr. "It was great to get the pole position

yesterday. We know how important it is at this place to drive in clean air. It helps the whole set-up of the car. You can look after your tyres and [it helps] with fuel economy. At the start, I had a lot of pressure from [Taylor/Albuquerque] going into Turn 1. After that, it was all about hitting the marks and that proves the car was good enough to stay in the lead. We knew it was going to be a fuel-saving race to make it to the end."

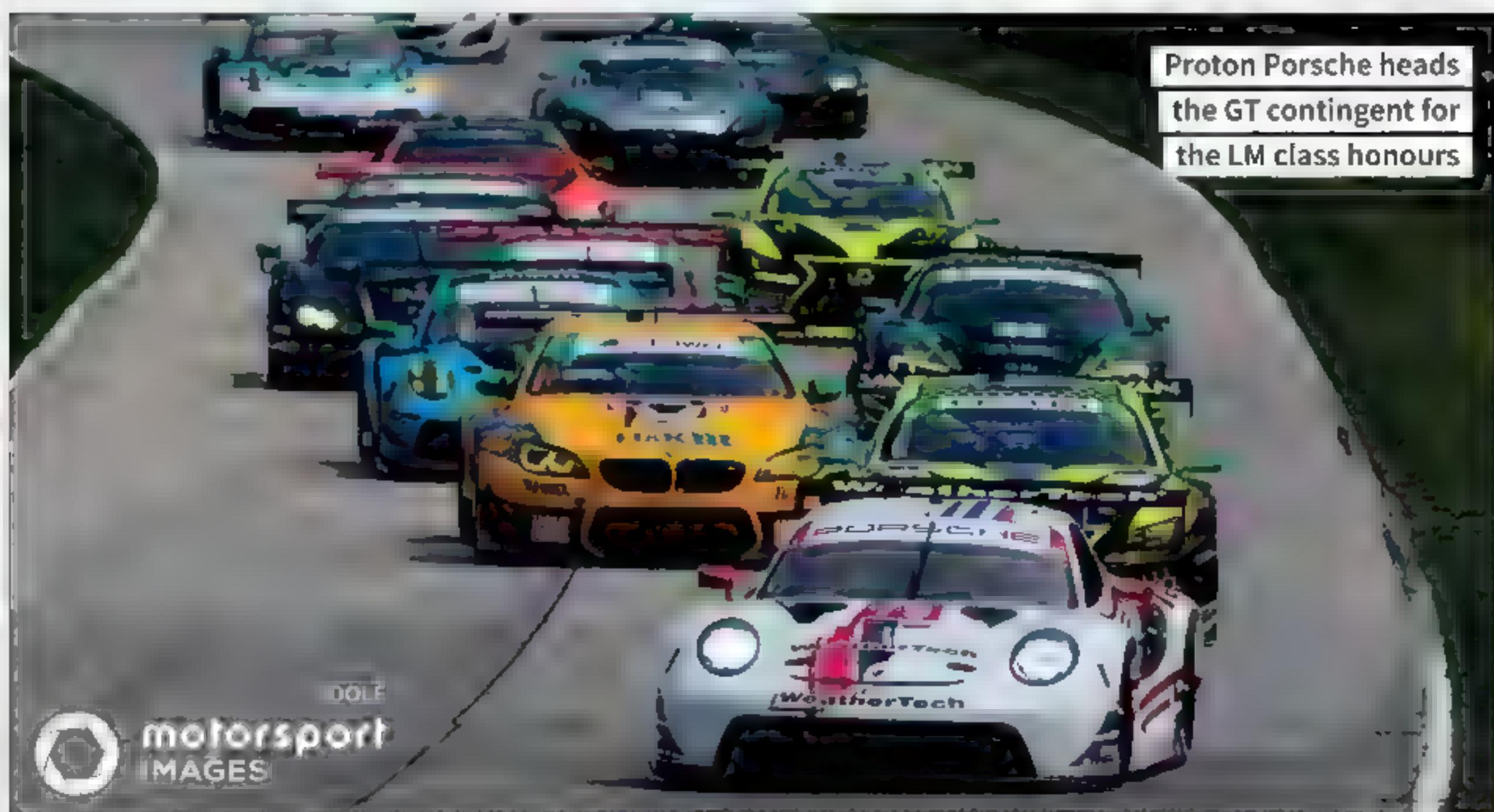
Kevin Magnussen/Renger van der Zande finished third in Chip Ganassi's Cadillac.

Porsche factory driver Matt Campbell teamed with Cooper MacNeil to score a well-judged second GTLM victory of the season for the Proton Competition team. Campbell made what was to be his final pitstop with just over an hour remaining and was able to eke out the fuel to finish well clear of the two favoured Chevrolet Corvettes of Jordan Taylor/Antonio Garcia and Nick Tandy/Tommy Milner.

Dwight Merriman and Ryan Dalziel took the LMP2 spoils for Era Motorsport, while Jon Bennett and Colin Braun emerged comfortably ahead of the LMP3 field for Bennett's CORE Autosport operation.

For the second time in three years, the Pfaff Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3-R swept up in GTD. Zach Robichon/Laurens Vanthoor led home the Turner Motorsports BMW M6 GT3 of Robby Foley and Bill Auberlen, who regained a narrow championship lead over Roman De Angelis/Ross Gunn. The Heart of Racing Team Aston Martin duo came home fourth in the 15-car GTD field.

JEREMY SHAW



Van der Linde and Wittmann split success

DTM
ZOLDER (BEL)
7-8 AUGUST
ROUND 3/8

Audi GT3 star Kelvin van der Linde extended his lead in the DTM standings with a second victory of the season at Zolder, while there was also jubilation in the BMW camp as Marco Wittmann ended his two-year win drought at the former Belgian Grand Prix venue.

Van der Linde was one of the title favourites heading into the revamped era of the DTM in 2021, thanks to the immense success he's achieved with the Audi R8 LMS in the GT3 arena. And, with the support of DTM powerhouse Abt Sportsline, the South African has delivered on those expectations and made a serious case for himself as the prime contender, building a 21-point buffer over Red Bull Ferrari driver Liam Lawson just three rounds into the season.

After qualifying on pole position for the first race of the weekend, van der Linde was chased hard by Wittmann at both the original getaway and the safety car restart. But the 25-year-old successfully staved off the threat from the Walkenhorst racer to remain in the lead.

Later, team-mate Mike Rockenfeller and Red Bull driver Alex Albon kept him honest in the second stint, but neither could attempt a move on van der Linde, despite the two-time GT Masters champion being hobbled by 15kg of success ballast. The win, which he secured by 0.7s, was in many ways payback for Lausitzring, where a sudden car stoppage dropped him from first to third, handing the victory to Maximilian Götz.

Sunday's race was always going to be hard for van der Linde, with additional success



ballast and an unrelated BoP hit dealing him with a double blow. He faded to eighth at the flag, his worst finish of the season.

With van der Linde out of the picture, his race one rival Wittmann capitalised on the opportunity to bag BMW's first win of the season with an emphatic drive from pole.

The two-time champion has had mixed results in the DTM since he finished an excellent third in the standings in 2019 against a dominant Audi contingent. But the second race at Zolder brought out the very best of Wittmann, the 31-year-old brilliantly fending off Lucas Auer after returning from the pits on cold tyres.

Winward Mercedes driver Auer was later hit with a 10-second penalty for a pitstop infringement, dropping him down to fifth. That promoted HRT Mercedes' Götz to second, while Lawson moved up to third, following Albon's race one result with a podium of his own.

This was the Kiwi's fourth podium of the year, but a DNF in the opening race of the weekend – where he was unlucky to be hit by Arjun Maini's Mercedes on the opening lap – meant that he lost significant ground in the points.

Elsewhere, Nico Müller's strategy to run long in the first stint paid dividends, helping the Team Rosberg driver charge to fourth place in race two – a relief after a nightmare weekend at the Lausitzring a fortnight ago with an issue on his Audi.

RACHIT THUKRAL

WEEKEND WINNERS

IMSA SPORTSCAR

ROAD AMERICA (USA)

DPi Felipe Nasr/Pipo Derani

Action Express Racing (Cadillac DPi-V.R)

LMP2 Dwight Merriman/Ryan Dalziel

Era Motorsport (ORECA-Gibson 07)

LMP3 Jon Bennett/Colin Braun

CORE Autosport (Ligier-Nissan JSP320)

GTLM Cooper MacNeil/Matt Campbell

Proton Competition (Porsche 911 RSR)

GTD Zacharie Robichon/Laurens Vanthoor

Pfaff Motorsports (Porsche 911 GT3-R)

DTM

ZOLDER (BEL)

Race 1 Kelvin van der Linde

ABT Sportsline (Audi R8 LMS Evo)

Race 2 Marco Wittmann

Walkenhorst Motorsport (BMW M6 GT3)

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Walkenhorst's Wittmann celebrates his 1.7s victory in the second encounter

MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Debutant Eng snares emotional electric victory

PURE ETCR
COPENHAGEN (DNK)
7-8 AUGUST
ROUND 3/5

Philipp Eng claimed a stunning Pure ETCR debut victory on the streets of Copenhagen to lead team-mate Luca Filippi in a highly emotional 1-2 finish for the Romeo Ferraris-M1RA squad.

The Austrian, who has replaced Stefano Coletti for the rest of the season, had only one morning's experience of the Alfa Romeo Giulia ETCR before arriving in the Danish capital – not that it showed for a moment.

With the regular 200kW power-up deactivated and a pair of permanent yellow-flag zones inserted for safety reasons at the Bellahøj Park street circuit, Friday's draw, which set the starting order for the opening battles, proved critical, with drivers

getting away from the middle lane of the three-abreast start having an advantage.

Eng won his opening-round heat but was beaten by Hyundai's Augusto Farfus in round two, leaving him with a lot to do on Sunday. But he topped his time trial to seal pole for Super Final B, and then led all the way to take a remarkable win.

The Romeo Ferraris-M1RA cars carried a tribute to one of the Giulia ETCR project's key instigators, Aldo Cerruti, who died last week. The emotion shown by Eng, Filippi and Aldo's daughter Michela – in her first event as team principal – was clear.

"Everyone has worked flat-out to achieve this and it feels amazing," said Eng. "My team-mates were such open books with their information that I don't feel like a rookie; I felt well-prepared, even though I only drove the car once before."

That Filippi was the target to be shot at as

Eng sat on the SuperFinal B starting grid was down to a remarkable SuperFinal A win at the expense of Mattias Ekstrom.

Ekstrom was fastest in his time trial to start SuperFinal A from pole, and he seemed set for a comfortable win until he grazed the wall on the penultimate lap. Sensing an opportunity, Filippi launched his car over the last chicane, inserting himself in a rapidly diminishing gap on the inside of the race's final kink to somehow squeeze past after side-by-side contact with the Cupra and the wall to win by 0.118s.

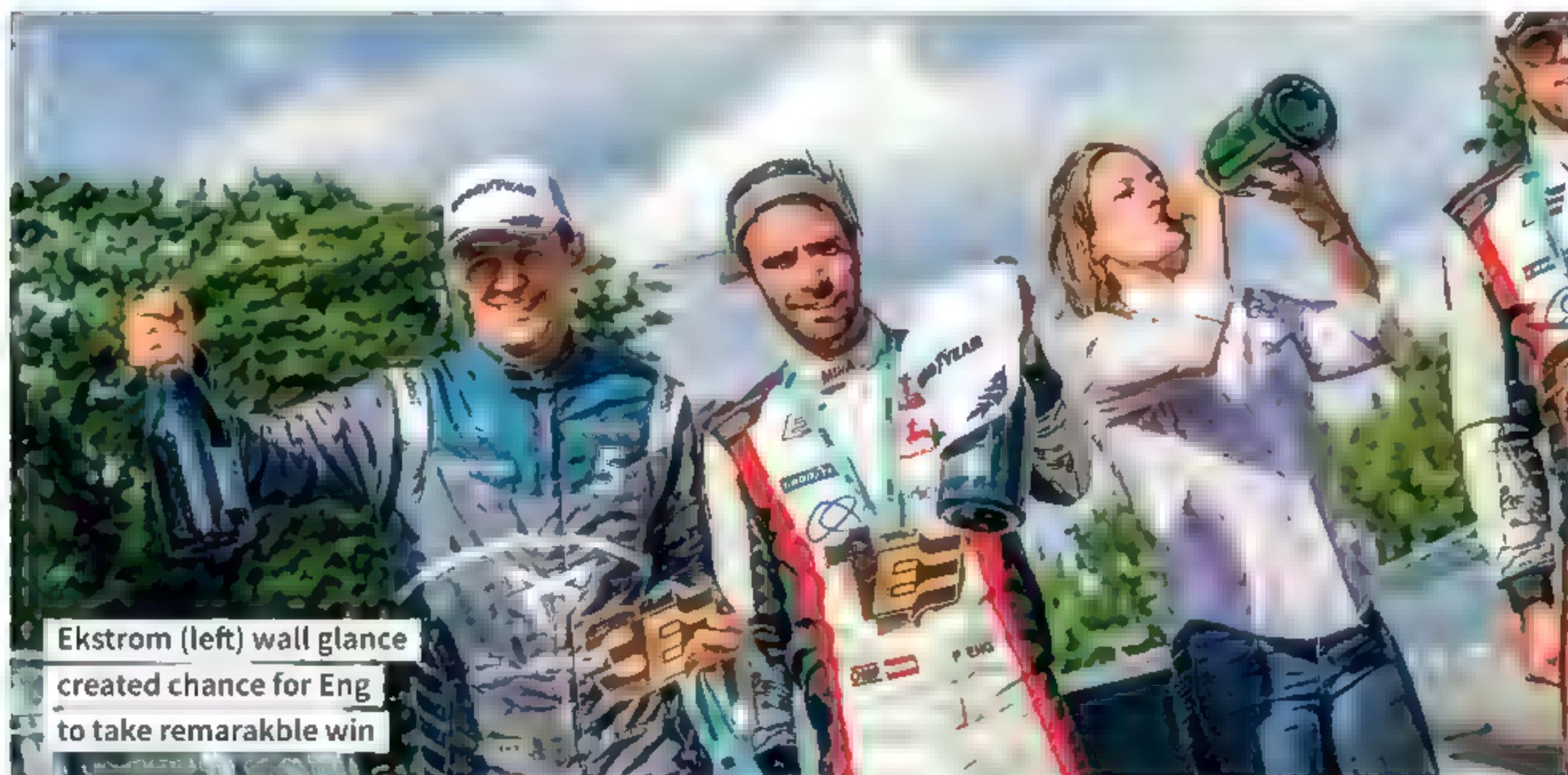
"I was driving too cautiously after scratching the wall," said Ekstrom, who left Denmark with a 24-point lead over Jean-Karl Vernay. "You don't like to lose a race like that, but it was better to have the points for second than to risk losing it all."

Vernay led Pool A at the halfway stage of the weekend, with Hyundai team-mate Farfus doing likewise in Pool B as both were unbeaten on Saturday. The Frenchman felt that his status as Pool leader – which meant he was first on track for the single-lap Time Trial that set the grid for his SuperFinal – had hindered him.

Vernay finished fourth overall while Farfus and John Filippi were last in their SuperFinals, and Tom Chilton – his Hyundai quicker than everyone bar Eng in Time Trial B – lost a near-certain second place after a drain cover caused a puncture.

The other battle winners over the weekend were Eng's team-mate Oli Webb and Cupra drivers Jordi Gene and Mikel Azcona, now third and fourth in the points.

DYLAN JACOBS



Ekstrom (left) wall glance created chance for Eng to take remarkable win

Larson back on form with Watkins win

NASCAR CUP
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
8 AUGUST
ROUND 23/36

Hendrick Motorsports returned to its winning ways last Sunday as Kyle Larson out-duelled team-mate Chase Elliott for NASCAR Cup victory at Watkins Glen.

Larson went into the lead with 26 of the 90 laps remaining, following a round of green-flag pitstops, and built a sizeable lead. But Elliott, who had won the two previous races at the 2.45-mile road course, finally got back into contention after starting from the rear due to multiple pre-race inspection failures.

Elliott moved into second behind Larson with eight laps left but, without the benefit of a late caution to bunch the field, the best Elliott could do was close a 10-second gap down to 2.4s at the flag.

Still, lapped traffic in the final four laps had made Larson nervous. "Chase was already catching me pretty quick,



even with me being in open track," he said. "So when I caught those four [lapped] cars, I thought I would look at my mirror and [Elliott] would be right on me. Thankfully, I had a comfortable enough gap to where I could make a mistake."

The win was Larson's fifth of the year – the most in one season in his career – and he is now tied on points with Denny Hamlin for the regular season lead with three races remaining before the start of the playoffs.

The victory ended a bit of a dry spell for Larson and his Hendrick Chevrolet team. Since he won three straight races at the end of May and into the beginning of June, he'd gone without victory in the previous five rounds and had only led a total of 15 laps.

Martin Truex Jr finished third, Kyle Busch fourth and Hamlin fifth in a Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota 3-4-5.

JIM UTTER

Gibbs's stock continues to rise

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
7 AUGUST
ROUND 20/33

Eighteen-year-old Ty Gibbs continued to impress as he fought off road racing ace AJ Allmendinger to win last Saturday's NASCAR Xfinity Series race at Watkins Glen.

Allmendinger had powered past Gibbs's Toyota Supra into the lead on a restart with just four of the 82 laps remaining, but Gibbs refused to yield. With two tours

to run, the grandson of NASCAR Hall of Famer and team boss Joe Gibbs went to the inside of Allmendinger to reclaim the lead for the final time.

Gibbs cruised from there, taking the chequered flag by 0.948 seconds ahead of Allmendinger for his third NASCAR Xfinity Series win in just 10 career starts. Austin Cindric, meanwhile, completed the podium.

"[Cindric] and AJ, they are like the baddest dudes on the road course ever and I don't really know how I beat them," said Gibbs. "My guys have worked so hard and did such a great job and we had just a great race."

Allmendinger said he knew his lead wasn't secure on the final restart, and had needed to see Gibbs drop back a couple more positions on the sprint to the line if he was to hold on in his Kaulig Racing Chevrolet. "If that would have happened..." said Allmendinger. "I passed him when he got in deep and he was carrying all the speed and I just throttled up on the outside to clear him. But I knew how good he was, especially through the carousel and the last corner."

Justin Allgaier was fourth and Harrison Burton rounded out the top five.

JIM UTTER



NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

WEEKEND WINNERS

PURE ETCR
COPENHAGEN (DNK)
Philipp Eng
Romeo Ferraris-M1RA
(Alfa Romeo Giulia ETCR)

NASCAR CUP
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
Kyle Larson
Hendrick Motorsports
(Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 1LE)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
Ty Gibbs
Joe Gibbs Racing
(Toyota Supra)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
WATKINS GLEN (USA)
Austin Hill
Hattori Racing Enterprises
(Toyota Tundra)

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Martin's success signals changing of the guard

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MOTOGP RED BULL RING (AUT) 9 AUGUST ROUND 10/19

If ever there was a moment that signalled the true changing of the guard in MotoGP, then it was on the podium of last Sunday's Styrian Grand Prix, when rookie Jorge Martin took to the top step for the very first time.

On a weekend preceded by the news that nine-time grand prix world champion Valentino Rossi will be retiring at the end of this season, Martin – just six races into his premier class career – snared his maiden victory ahead of reigning world champion Joan Mir and Fabio Quartararo, who are both in only their third top-flight campaigns. With a combined age of just 68, the Styrian GP podium was nine years younger than the

Petronas SRT Yamaha line-up of Rossi and Franco Morbidelli's stand-in Cal Crutchlow.

The Red Bull Ring race should have been Martin's 10th MotoGP start, but a four-race injury layoff following a crash in Portugal in April severely robbed him of track time. Yet the Pramac Ducati rider showed no signs of the knock-on effects as he stormed to his second MotoGP pole with an all-time lap record for the Austrian circuit.

After running so brilliantly at the front in the Doha GP from his first pole, Martin wasn't to be flustered on what was his best chance of victory to date. He was sitting second on lap three when the race was red-flagged for a fiery accident involving KTM wildcard Dani Pedrosa and Aprilia's Lorenzo Savadori – the Italian suffered a broken ankle – and was sent back to pole for the restart.

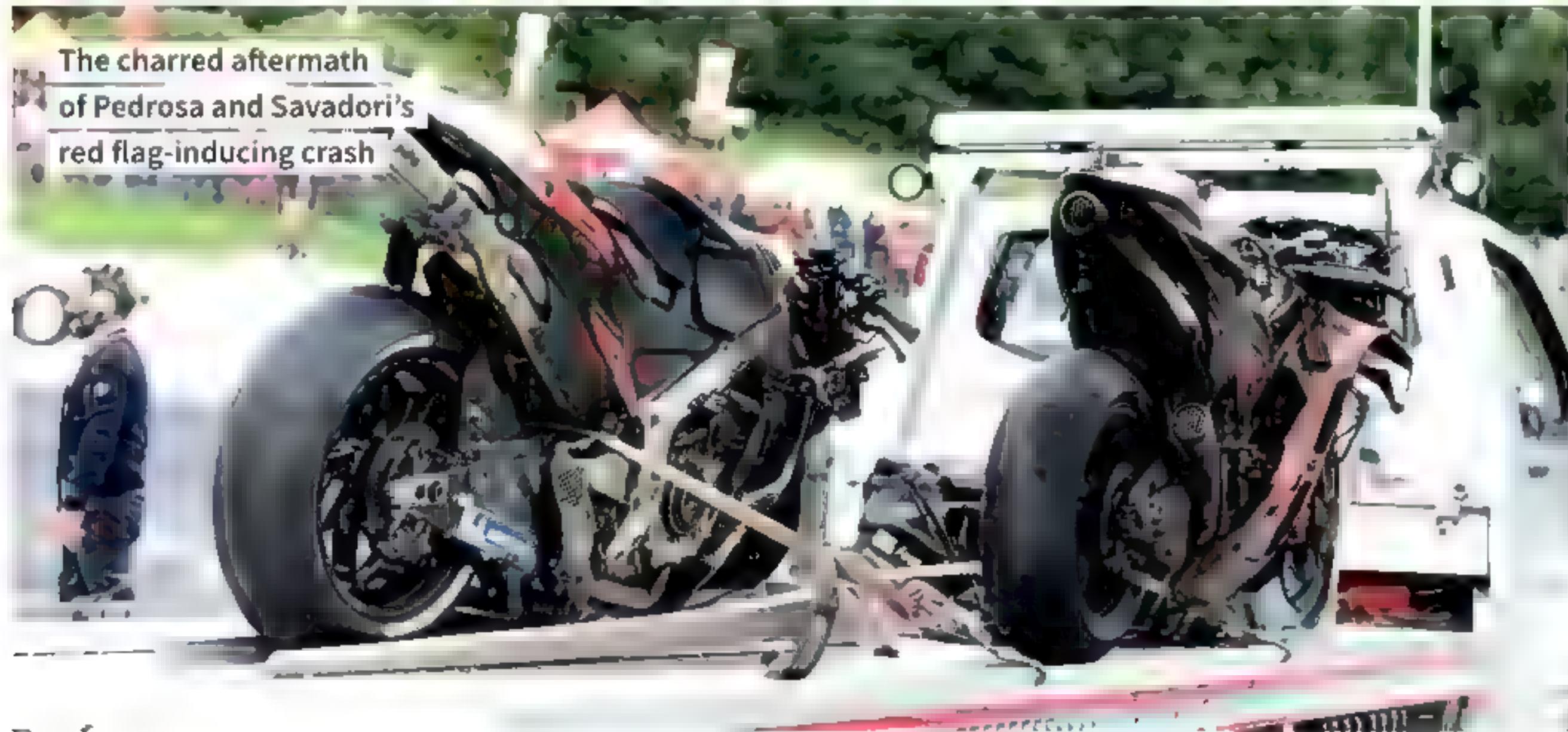
Martin would spend the first four laps staring at the rear of factory Ducati counterpart Jack Miller, while the Australian's team-mate Francesco Bagnaia went from leading the first race to plummeting through the order with rear grip issues – he was one of several riders hit by dodgy tyres at the restart.

Martin took the lead on lap four, and the battle for the spoils quickly became a two-horse race: Martin's Ducati against Mir on a Suzuki that finally sported the ride height adjuster it had lacked over the first half of the season. There was nothing to separate the pair on the timing screens. Martin used the sheer grunt of the Ducati to keep in front on the runs through the first two sectors, while Mir deployed the Suzuki's agility to close back in again through the final two splits.

The turning point came on lap 19 of 27, when Martin's lead opened out to 0.8s. A mistake from Mir at Turn 3 on lap 22 ended his victory charge, the gap rising to 1.2s and continuing to climb until the flag.

Ducati success in Austria has become the norm since the Red Bull Ring returned to the schedule in 2016. Its latest Styria success again vindicates the team's decision to bank largely on youth at the end of 2020.

Second for Mir was an important result in his hopes to rescue his title defence, and he has closed the points deficit to 51 to series leader Quartararo, whose result was similarly significant given the circuit exposes all of Yamaha's weaknesses. With





Bagnaia 11th after a 3s time addition for failing to comply with a long-lap penalty, Pramac Ducati rider Johann Zarco sixth, and Miller crashing out late on while chasing Quartararo for third, the last-named has opened his lead to 40 points over Zarco.

Brad Binder salvaged a largely difficult first of two home rounds for KTM with a fine charge from 16th on the grid to fourth, while Pedrosa bravely got back on his RC16 after his scary incident to end his wildcard outing 10th. Miguel Oliveira, battling a wrist injury from a crash in practice, had to retire with a front-tyre issue.

Takaaki Nakagami was top Honda rider in fifth ahead of Zarco and Suzuki's Alex Rins, while Marc Marquez struggled with an iffy tyre to eighth. Marquez courted Aleix Espargaro's rage with Turn 1 collisions in both race starts, with Espargaro furious at the lack of a penalty for the Honda rider.

Marquez headed his LCR Honda-mounted brother Alex, while Espargaro was forced out with an engine issue. Maverick Vinales had his best start in ages in the first race, but stalled his Yamaha for the restart and had to launch from pitlane. He finished the race in pitlane with electrical problems.

Thirteenth for Rossi isn't a result to write home about. But now that the sands of time are slowly counting down to his farewell in November, where he finishes has almost become immaterial. Now it's simply a matter of enjoying the conclusion to motorsport's greatest two-wheeled story.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS ROUND 10/19, RED BULL RING (AUT), 8 AUGUST 27 LAPS - 72.443 MILES

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Jorge Martin (ESP)	Pramac Ducati	38m07.879s
2	Joan Mir (ESP)	Suzuki	+1.548s
3	Fabio Quartararo (FRA)	Yamaha	+9.632s
4	Brad Binder (ZAF)	KTM	+12.771s
5	Takaaki Nakagami (JPN)	LCR Honda	+12.923s
6	Johann Zarco (FRA)	Pramac Ducati	+13.031s
7	Alex Rins (ESP)	Suzuki	+14.839s
8	Marc Marquez (ESP)	Honda	+17.953s
9	Alex Marquez (ESP)	LCR Honda	+19.059s
10	Dani Pedrosa (ESP)	KTM	+19.389s
11	Francesco Bagnaia (ITA)	Ducati	+21.667s
12	Enea Bastianini (ITA)	Avintia Ducati	+25.267s
13	Valentino Rossi (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha	+26.282s
14	Luca Marini (ITA)	Avintia Ducati	+27.492s
15	Iker Lecuona (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+31.076s
16	Pol Espargaro (ESP)	Honda	+31.150s
17	Cal Crutchlow (GBR)	Petronas Yamaha	+40.408s
18	Danilo Petrucci (ITA)	Tech3 KTM	+48.114s
NC	Maverick Vinales (ESP)	Yamaha	+1m03.149s
R	Jack Miller (AUS)	Ducati	18 laps-crash
R	Miguel Oliveira (PRT)	KTM	14 laps-tyre
R	Aleix Espargaro (ESP)	Aprilia	4 laps-engine
NS	Lorenzo Savadori (ITA)	Aprilia	crash

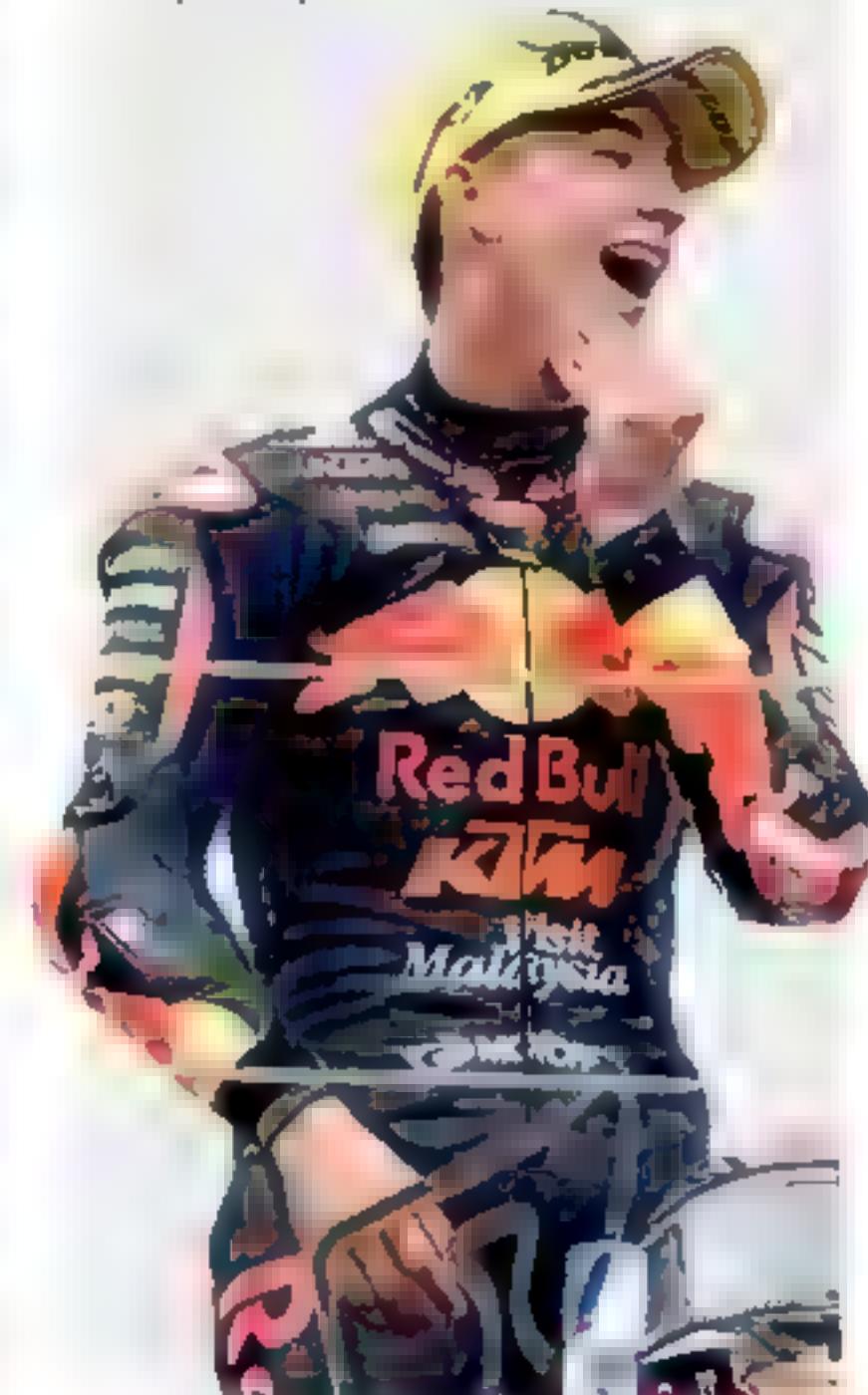
WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2

RED BULL RING (AUT)
Marco Bezzecchi
Team VR46
(Kalex)

MOTO3

RED BULL RING (AUT)
Pedro Acosta (below)
Ajo Motorsport
(KTM)



Winner's average speed 113.990mph. Fastest lap Mir 1m24.209s, 114.703mph.

QUALIFYING 21 Martin 1m22.994s; 2 Bagnaia 1m23.038s; 3 Quartararo 1m23.075s; 4 Miller 1m23.300s; 5 Mir 1m23.322s; 6 Zarco 1m23.376s; 7A Espargaro 1m23.448s; 8M Marquez 1m23.489s; 9Vinales 1m23.508s; 10 Nakagami 1m23.536s; 11A Marquez 1m23.841s; 12 Oliveira 1m23.944s.

QUALIFYING 1A Marquez 1m23.547s; Oliveira 1m23.552s; 13 Rins 1m23.585s; 14 Pedrosa 1m23.730s; 15P Espargaro 1m23.971s; 16 Binder 1m24.050s; 17 Rossi 1m24.097s; 18 Marini 1m24.115s; 19 Lecuona 1m24.141s; 20 Bastianini 1m24.245s; 21 Savadori 1m24.405s; 22 Petrucci 1m24.465s; 23 Crutchlow 1m24.513s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Quartararo 172; 2 Zarco 132; 3 Mir 121; 4 Bagnaia 114; 5 Miller 100; 6 Vinales 95; 7 Oliveira 85; 8 Binder 73; 9A Espargaro 61; 10M Marquez 58; 11 Nakagami 52; 12 Martin 48; 13 Rins 42; 14P Espargaro 41; 15 Franco Morbidelli 40; 16A Marquez 34; 17 Bastianini 31; 18 Petrucci 26; 19 Rossi 20; 20 Marini 16; 21 Lecuona 14; 22 Stefan Bradl 11; 23 Pedrosa 6; 24 Savadori 4; 25 Michele Pirro 3; 26 Tito Rabat 1; 27 Crutchlow 0; 27 Garrett Gerloff 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Yamaha 200; 2 Ducati 192, 3 KTM 127, 4 Suzuki 125, 5 Honda 97, 6 Aprilia 62.



NEXT REPORT

AUSTRIAN GP
19 AUGUST ISSUE

Will Martin snare his second top-flight victory in as many races as the MotoGP paddock remains at the Red Bull Ring? Can points leader Quartararo bolster his title challenge?

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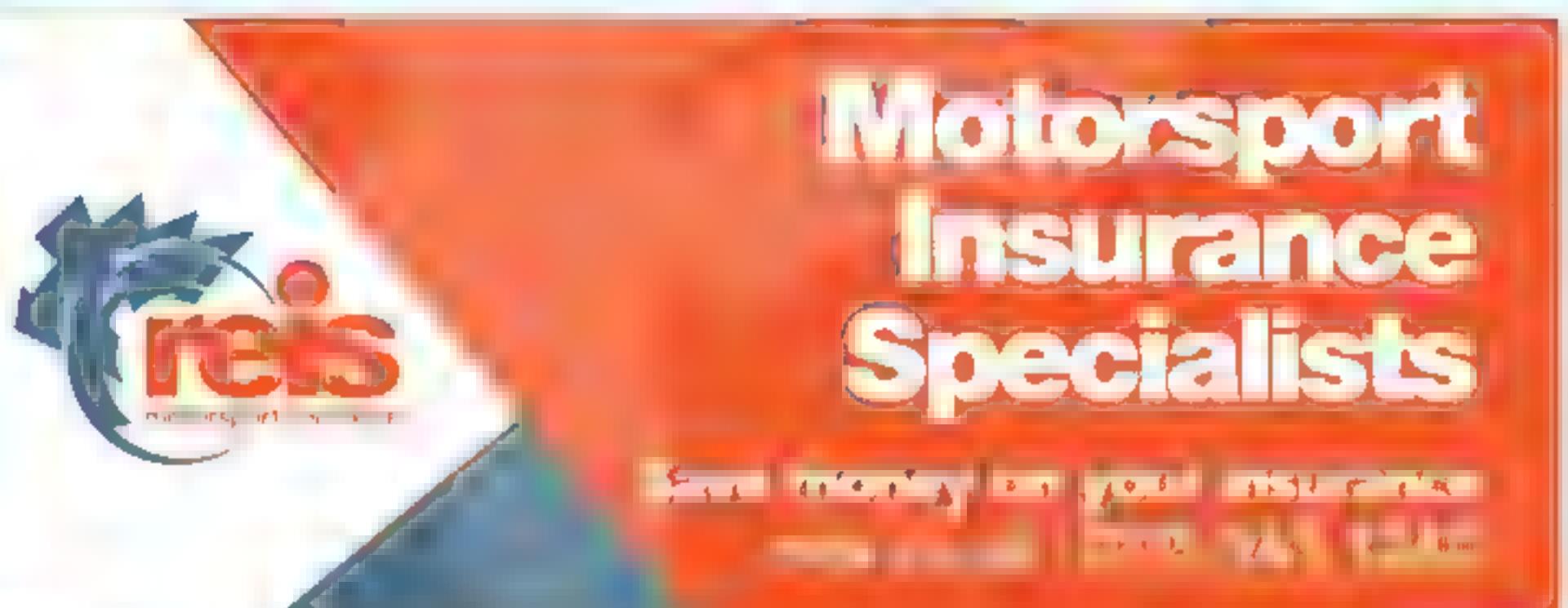
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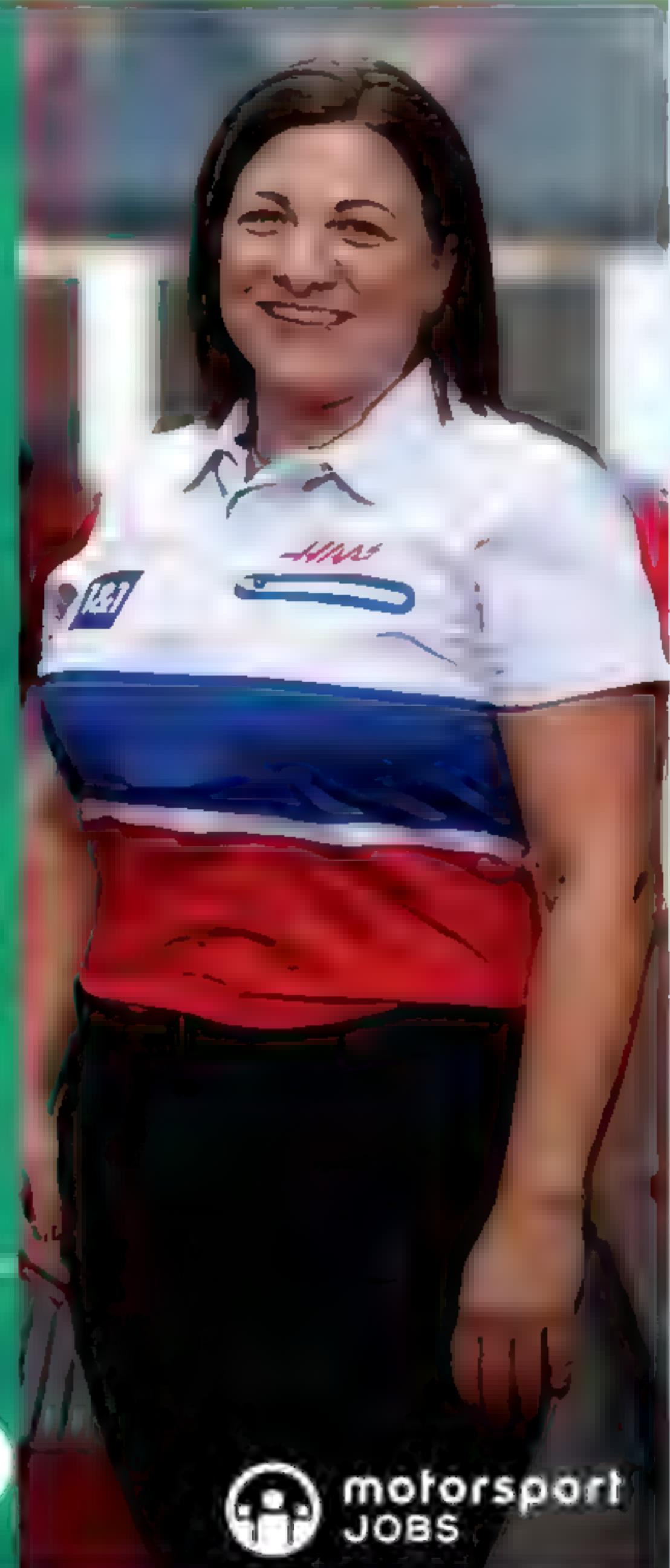
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New era for UK single-seaters

Motorsport UK to organise British F4 from 2022, as GB3 has its first weekend



BUURMAN AND LOGGIE SPLASH TO VICTORY



REMEMBERING BERNARD COTTRELL



NEW FORMULA FOUNDATION CAR HITS THE TRACK

BEVAN IMPUDENCE REINCARNATED

The Imps of George Bevan became famous in tin-top competition during the early 1970s. Thanks to the efforts of a small band of enthusiasts, one of the ex-Bill McGovern title winners has recently returned to the race track

MARCUS PYE

PHOTOGRAPHY HAWKINS



Fifty years ago, Irishman Bill McGovern matched Australian Frank Gardner's back-to-back British Saloon Car Championship titles. But in his case it was from the 1000cc class, driving Imps prepared by George Bevan, doyen of privateer entrants. The following season, 1972, they rewrote the history books, winning all 10 rounds to complete a resounding hat-trick — despite a frosty relationship with Chrysler's competition department.

Bevan, from the Isle of Dogs in east London, made Chinese restaurant cookers for a living. He and his small team — who worked on both — set exemplary standards. The Lagoon Blue Imps, prepared behind his end-of-terrace council house at St Paul's Cray, Orpington in a borrowed double garage, were class victors in 28 of the 33 BSCC races they started over the three campaigns!

North London-domiciled furniture man McGovern debuted for Bevan in 1969, in an Imp built for son Peter who had stopped. Despite Bill rolling it at Crystal Palace, their partnership gelled. "George was an amazing man — he could make anything on a centre lathe," recalls McGovern. Bevan played the game beautifully. He took an identical spare car to events and ran a pool of practice, qualifying and race engines in rotation.

McGovern recalls two races when the team snatched maximum points against the odds: "At Brands Hatch's 1972 finale, the engine wouldn't fire in the assembly area, so I went to the back of the grid, angled the car downhill at Clearways and bump-started it. And at the TT I'd had a rear puncture on the first lap. I crawled back to the pits, knowing the spare wheel was a long way away, so we put a wet on the [lighter-loaded] offside rear. It ran to the end, but I had to be careful in left-handers."

Period Autosport reports note a prodigious output of 108bhp for the lightweight all-alloy 998cc units. This exposed the transmission as the Imps' Achilles' heel. The Jack Knight gearboxes (ratios in which were juggled endlessly) coped admirably, but the rubber doughnut driveshaft couplings — which took a pounding given just three bolt engine mountings, and were changed between sessions — were the chain's weakest link, exacerbated by wide Dunlop tyres. Nonetheless, rivals found slim pickings.

Mike Freeman in the Andrew Mylius Graphics-entered Imp claimed the points at the two Brands Hatch races in 1970 where McGovern broke, a rare clutch and engine failure spoiling the British GP-supporting round. Jeremy Nightingale's Imp outlasted them at Oulton Park's Gold Cup, where fumes from gearbox oil



McGovern (inset) took three BSCC titles with Bevan Imps



"THE ENGINE WOULDN'T FIRE, SO I ANGLED THE CAR DOWNHILL AT CLEARWAYS AND BUMP-STARTED IT"

leaking onto the exhaust forced Bill to stop. A superb Division 1-dominating 16th overall at Silverstone's RAC Tourist Trophy enduro (a European Championship round, with strong international entry, paying double points), distanced the challenges of larger capacity aces Gardner (Ford Mustang) and John Fitzpatrick (Escort).

In 1971, Chrysler (formerly Rootes Group) development engineer Bernard Unett — "the best of the Imp drivers," asserts McGovern — and future Special/Super Saloon star John Turner got look-ins when McGovern broke, at Thruxton and Silverstone's Martini International Trophy event respectively. At the latter, contact with an Escort burst the front-mounted oil cooler.

Over the three glory years, the Bevan cars' reliability record was peerless. Particularly since their speed often pitched McGovern against the next class up: the 1300cc Ford Escort GTs and Mini Cooper Ss. His 86mph lap records at Snetterton (then with the long Norwich Straight), Oulton Park and Brands Hatch GP, 88mph at Thruxton and Mallory Park, and a staggering 95mph-plus on Silverstone's GP circuit were impressive. Some eclipsed marks from the previous Group 5 era in which regulations were freer.

Nonetheless, Group 2 led to wider wheelarches, fibreglass >>

bonnet and boot lids, front disc brakes, triple-plate clutches and stronger drive couplings permitted through the 698kg Sunbeam's homologation – hence existing Hillmans were rebadged advantageously. Peter Bevan, who worked for his dad and wove his magic on cylinder heads in a shed at the bottom of the garden, was in demand. Bevan engines won championships globally.

Peter's son Jonathan, now 50, is – if anything – even prouder of the extraordinary heritage. Three years ago, he acquired one of the later Bevan Imps – there were four – from the widow of Wolfgang Rische in Germany. During 2020's COVID-19 lockdown, the Brands Hatch local massaged it back into shape in his double garage, using as many original components as possible. Its lustrous blue finish and delightful original triangular Bevan sticker evidence detailing in his DNA.

With a Goodwood Festival of Speed invitation focusing its completion, the little beauty burst into life for the first time in more than 40 years and was shaken down in torrential rain at Brands in June. Team friend Michael Crees, BTCC's 2020 Jack Sears Trophy winner and recent Porsche Supercup racer, and Jonathan's team-mate Rod Birley had short puddle-jumping runs before the emotional owner took the wheel.

"I'd been looking for a Bevan Imp for years, and spotted it on Facebook in 2018," he says. "Rische had bought three Imps – ours and two Team Hartwell cars – through my grandad's agent Hans Sauer. They were piled high in the background of a picture taken in his workshop. I couldn't believe it, so made contact and set off for Cologne. The intermediary, Thomas Gotschl, is the most honourable gentleman I've met. He clearly felt the car belonged back with us and a friendly deal was done.

"It was the barn find enthusiasts all dream of, exactly as it last competed in 1979, still with shell damage. With it were log books recording all its races and hillclimbs. The engine was original, with grandad's GB stampings, duplicated on the rear mount. There were spares too, so I really lucked in!"

"While I can't say with absolute certainty which of them it is – individual shell details were not recorded – I'm pretty sure it is the one built for the London Motor Show in 1971 and raced [to 14th] in the 1972 TT. After Bill crashed the last car [with twin-headlights per Chrysler's facelift] badly at Thruxton in 1973, it was substituted, Les Nash having bought the previous Imp. I couldn't wait to get the car home and start recommissioning it."

The bodyshell was entrusted to Colin Rooney at CA Restoration, and the engine to Imp guru Andy Jones at Shrigley Engineering.



"Both did incredible jobs," says Jonathan. Much of the engine is original, but bearings, pistons [Hepolite Powermax] and valve springs were replaced. The crankshafts were initially cast iron – steel came later – running in three main bearings. The Armstrong front dampers and double-adjustable Koni rears are original too. Wheels are 13-inch diameter, run in 7in and 8in (front) and 9in and 10in (rear) widths.

The cockpit is spartan by comparison with today's touring cars. The rollcage is nothing like as comprehensive, albeit much stiffer than the early hoops that racer John Aley professionalised in the 1960s. "Vic Lee of Corbeau supplied the high-back seat, as [company founder and subsequently DAF Super Saloon racer] Colin Folwell did in period," recalls Jonathan. "Racing saloons had low-back seats until Bill's Thruxton crash, after which the RAC changed the regulations.

"An oil leak on the test session was a worry, but [with Goodwood imminent] Andy Jones pulled out all the stops to rectify it. Although I was conscious that I was at the Festival of Speed for the show, not chasing times, I was very nervous," adds Jonathan. "With the 'GB72' cam, there is no power under 4500rpm and 5000-6000 was necessary to get it moving. These Imp engines scream and, with a straight through exhaust and a limit of 9000rpm, it sounded like a little F1 car under the trees."



Autosport scribe Pye gets feedback from driver Crees



Crees had a blast too and, but for the diff tightening as he turned in to the paddock after the final run, the long-dormant racer had delighted spectators anew.

While Bevan did a brilliant job for Chrysler, they did not have a great relationship, beyond him being able to select engine components and buy them at special rates. "George and competitions manager Des O'Dell did not get on at all," remembers McGovern. "In the Rootes Group days, George got money."

Bevan continues: "Grandad loved his independence, but was a nightmare to deal with, very stubborn. When the Imps came to the end of their competitive life, he wanted to move on to the new Hillman Avenger, but Unett [who ultimately won British championships in 1974, 1976 and 1977 in well-specified versions, with controversial 'Brazilian blocks'] got the gig."

Bevan switched horses to Volkswagen, running McGovern in a sponsored Passat, but it was a disaster, a largely forgotten adjunct to their glory days. "Des O'Dell came up to me at Thruxton in 1973, offering me a deal to race a [works] Avenger the following year," remembers McGovern, "but I said, 'Sorry, I'm with George.' That was that. We knew straight away that we were in trouble. VW needed time to homologate parts."

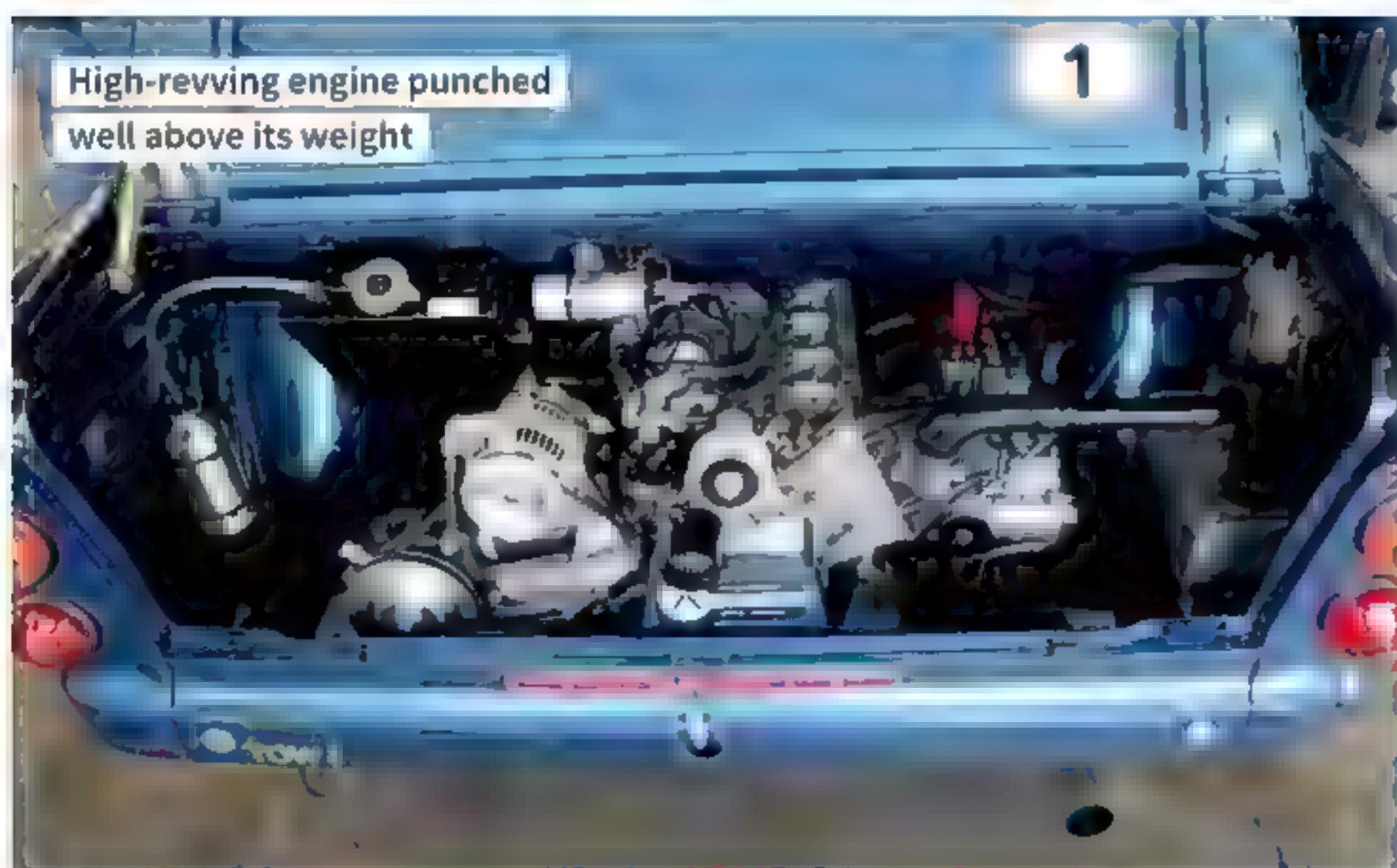
Bevan rues: "If they'd hung in there until the Golf GTI arrived, it would have been a very different story. George would have

thrown everything at that. At the cooker business's height in the 1970s, selling two a month paid the business overheads, but he was doing 20 and always had a full order book. He was making a lot of money but spent it all on racing, cruises and holidays in Spain – while living in his council house!

"[Half a century on] I love tinkering away quietly on the Imp and my Honda [Integra] with mates. That way, I'm able to compete without it costing a lot. I prefer the preparation to the racing, but the Goodwood experience was fantastic. They looked after us so well and I couldn't believe the reaction to the car. It was incredible. I was invited to take part in the opening runs up the hill, and arriving at the top paddock just being among famous cars and drivers was unreal. A great privilege and everything I'd wanted for the Imp, which was surrounded by enthusiasts all weekend, perhaps more so than more familiar BTCC cars?"

"I have been offered a lot of money for it, but that's not the point. It's not something I could race competitively today, but a tribute to grandad and dad's achievements with Bill, part of our family's history. It's my pension I suppose, but I do love a project and am always looking towards the next one. I'm really excited that we were able to get dad's Austin A40 back and that its restoration is progressing well. Now that's a car we will be able to race and enjoy together when it's back on track next year." **W**

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MOTORSPORT UK TO RUN BRITISH F4

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Motorsport UK will take over organisation of British Formula 4 from next year, with Ford's over 50 years of support to UK junior single-seater racing simultaneously coming to an end.

A new second generation of FIA F4 machines, fitted with the halo cockpit protection device, will come on stream for 2022, and British governing body Motorsport UK has decided that it will review many other aspects of the series to coincide with the adoption of the new car. It has put out tenders for chassis, engine and tyre suppliers.

Since its inception, British F4 has been promoted by RacingLine, which also managed F4's British Formula Ford predecessor. But RacingLine will have no involvement from next year and neither will the series' key backer, Ford.

The manufacturer's investment in UK single-seaters stretches continuously

back to 1967, when its Kent engine was used to power the new Formula Ford category masterminded by Brands Hatch supremo John Webb.

Motorsport UK has decided to adopt a fresh approach to single-seaters in Britain and has drafted in ex-F1 driver Karun Chandhok to play a key role in shaping this. It says it has a "bold vision for elevating the series" during its next three years as organiser and, as well as appearing at British Touring Car meetings, is assessing holding rounds at other "key events".

Motorsport UK CEO Hugh Chambers told Autosport earlier this year: "I think British F4 has been successful – it's produced some amazing racing and superstars like Lando Norris [the series' inaugural champion]. But I think the world of F4 and the FIA's single-seater pathway has evolved and we need to make sure the UK stays completely relevant."

"The generation two [car] has been the catalyst for us to review the championship – it's the appropriate time. British F4 should be the best in the world. When you see the Italian championship and their grids, the relationship with F1 academies, and the connection between karting and Italian F4 is very close. We don't currently enjoy that same relationship."

In a statement, RacingLine said: "Having operated as the organiser/promoter of the British F4 Championship since its inception seven years ago, RacingLine and its team of passionate individuals regret Motorsport UK's takeover of the organisation of British F4 has been concluded without the opportunity for a public tender process to cover this role. The end of this season will

therefore mark the end of RacingLine's 17-year operation of British F4 (and British Formula Ford before that).

"The RacingLine team would like to thank British F4's partners – the teams, sponsors, drivers and suppliers, each of whom have been integral to the development of British F4 into the highly-regarded championship it is today, and wish them good luck for a successful second generation of British F4 under Motorsport UK's organisation."

Teams have given a mixed reaction to the news, with some concerned by the lack of detail of Motorsport UK's plans for 2022 and how it will operate the series without the significant financial backing of Ford, while others are encouraged by the governing body's record after taking over the British Kart Championships.

"It's going to add prestige to the championship so that's going to benefit all the teams and drivers," said Argenti Motorsport boss Michael Meadows. "Since they started supporting the British Kart Championships, it's really helped those series. I think everyone fears the unknown – they just want to see the plan so the sooner we get that, the better. I'm all for it."

Arden general manager Richard Dent added: "It's an interesting development – it was a little bit of a shock. If they put their weight behind it and the teams, I think it could be a good thing."

Fortec owner Richard Dutton admitted he is a "bit concerned" and says it's a "big ask" for Motorsport UK. "We will wait and see – I'm intrigued to hear more," he said. "Before I commit, I want to know more."

STEPHEN LICKORISH



JEP/MOTORSPORTIMAGES



Bernard Cottrell 1953-2021

OBITUARY

The loss of prominent race official Bernard Cottrell, who died last weekend following a long battle with illness, leaves a huge void in British motorsport. His legacy, as a lynchpin of the industry and as a racing character, is such that his many career highlights barely scratch the surface of the enormous contribution he made through half a century's dedicated service.

A larger-than-life personality, whose willingness to assist was matched only by a razor-sharp appreciation for the big picture and cunning eye for detail, Cottrell's draw was magnetic. Perhaps that, and his strong sense of fairness, is why he commanded respect at all points of the racing spectrum.

He began it all as a track marshal with the British Racing & Sports Car Club in 1971 at Lydden Hill and Brands Hatch, while working in the City as a 'blue button' on the London Stock Exchange. He rose through the ranks and became a fire truck marshal, before being promoted to chief paddock marshal.

Asked in the 1990s by late BRSOC chairman John Nicol to become a clerk of the course, Cottrell excelled in the role, earning the highest International A Clerk licence. He oversaw countless events both in the UK and internationally, treating each one with the same level of professionalism, reverence and fairness, although it was a source of immense pride to him that he clerked both British grands prix in 2020.

He served the BRSOC as national

chairman between 2002 and 2017, and worked tirelessly to give the organisation the stature it now commands. During this time, he also quit the money markets and joined Haymarket Publishing as operations manager, where he became Autosport International's event director.

Poor health forced him to step away from the BRSOC in 2017, but he returned to the sport as a steward and, for the last two years, served as race director for the 750 Motor Club. He also served on Motorsport UK's Council, Race Committee, Rules Committee and was chair of the Volunteer Officials Committee, and was one of the BRDC's few non-racing members.

Cottrell fought leukaemia for seven years with courage and integrity, and in his last months he continued to contribute to the sport he loved so much. Among the tidal wave of social media tributes was a common theme: that everyone felt they had lost a close friend. Motorsport has had few finer.

"Bernard was one of the unsung heroes of motorsport to whom we all owe an enormous debt of gratitude," said Motorsport UK chairman David Richards. "He was instrumental in maintaining the high standards of race management that we enjoy in this country and Bernard's support of officials will be sorely missed."

To his five children, seven grandchildren and his partner Anne, Autosport extends its sympathies. We will miss him dearly.

SIMON STRANG

New Quick60 hillclimb competition

HILLCLIMBING

A new hillclimb event featuring a unique knockout format is due to be held at Shelsley Walsh next weekend.

The Quick60 Hillclimb Challenge has been designed to be entertaining for drivers and

spectators alike. Four broad classes have been created for the 21 August fixture and, after each run, half of the entries will be eliminated. The drivers will then continue to be whittled down until the final two battle for the class crown. Each class winner will receive £250, as will the

overall fastest driver of the day.

"We wanted to bring something new, something challenging and something entertaining to the table," said David Murphy, director of organiser Retro Rides, who added it had long been an ambition to run such an event.



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RYAN
MOTOSPORT INSURANCE

Bacon given yellow card for MG Trophy clash with Savage

MG TROPHY

MG Trophy racer Josh Bacon has been handed a yellow card by the category's Driving Standards Committee for his part in causing a dramatic roll for Paul Savage at Donington Park last month.

Bacon had already been handed two points on his licence for his role in the crash exiting the final corner in the first MG Trophy race. But the incident has also been looked at by the Trophy Driving Standards Committee, who deemed Bacon's driving to be "reckless" and handed him the yellow card. If he were to receive another one within six months, he would be given a red card,

which leads to a two-race suspension.

"It should have the effect of warning drivers you are being watched," said Savage, who was unhurt in the accident, although his ZR 190 was written off. "It's hopefully enough of a deterrent."

Savage is working to have a new car built ready for next season, but how many races he contests may be dependent on the "big unknown" of the number of parts that can be salvaged from the crashed machine.

"I'm hoping the engine is going to be OK," he added. "DC Motorsport think we've got a shell to start building but that will be a winter job. It might end up being a short season, because of budget."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Savage will attempt to salvage parts from crashed ZR 190



WALKER

Winfield claims maiden TCT victory

TOURING CAR TROPHY

Reigning Civic Cup champion Bruce Winfield claimed his maiden win in the Touring Car Trophy as the series visited Anglesey for the first time last weekend.

After securing his first pole position, Winfield's Cupra TCR DSG fended off the early challenge of Max Hart's Hyundai i30 N TCR to win by six seconds, with Dan Kirby (Cupra) taking third.

Bradley Kent was classified sixth in race one, so started the reversed-grid race from pole in his Hyundai and pulled clear of the scrap for second to secure his third win of the season. Winfield and Kirby eventually completed the podium in an attritional race.

Championship leader Lewis Kent (Hyundai)

had a mixed weekend, scoring a best result of fourth in the opener before contact with Kirby restricted him to fifth in race two. But Kent remains in a strong position to retain his TCR UK title heading into the final round at Donington Park later this month following Hart's retirement from race two.

Alistair Camp consolidated his Civic Cup points lead with a reversed-grid win, despite a broken engine mount, having lost out in a four-way scrap in the opener.

Jamie Tonks took a maiden series win in race one, then followed Camp home later in the day, while Phil Wright overcame engine issues to finish third in race two. Matt Luff was unable to convert his third consecutive pole into a win, finishing in second and fourth places.

MARK PAULSON

IN THE HEADLINES

TRIBUTES TO FOOTE

Tributes were paid at Brands Hatch last weekend to Rob Foote, the marshal who was killed in an accident at the circuit a week earlier. Before the first Caterham Seven UK race, the British Racing & Sports Car Club's safety car, medical car and two emergency response vehicles drove a lap of honour as marshals lined the circuit with flags lowered. Officials and marshals gathered on the grid as commentator Dan Wright read a tribute from Foote's fellow marshals, before a minute's silence and then applause in appreciation of all marshals' crucial work.

GOODWOOD FUNDRAISER

A total of £30,000 was raised for children with brain injuries following The Children's Trust Supercar Event at Goodwood last month. Ninety cars with a combined value of almost £18million took part, giving passenger rides to paying visitors. A date of 22-23 July has already been set for next year's event.

MINI DRIVERS WITHDRAW

Jim Loukes and Oliver Barker, the two drivers to roll in the Mini Challenge at Oulton Park earlier this month, are both set to be absent from this weekend's event at Knockhill. OX4 Racing driver Loukes rolled after running wide at Old Hall and skating into the barriers, while Excelr8 racer Barker had a huge impact with the barriers on the inside of Cascades following a tangle with Sam Weller.

HILL JR'S CLIO RACING FORAY

Fifty years after his father – Super Saloon pioneer Mick – debuted his first Ford Capri V8, Greg Hill has been cutting his racing teeth in the 750 Motor Club's Renault Clio 182 series. He made his debut at Donington in May, and improved his best result to 12th on Silverstone's International circuit (below) last Sunday, as two seconds covered the top 20 drivers' best laps. "It's special to race – I bet dad's looking down," he said.



GT5 team boss gives thanks after truck fire

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Ginetta GT5 Challenge team boss Alastair Rushforth has thanked marshals and the fire brigade for their actions in putting out a fire in the team's awning at Snetterton last weekend.

The incident occurred on Saturday at the British GT meeting shortly after 3pm, and halted track proceedings for more than two hours while first marshals and circuit officials battled the blaze, before three fire engines attended the scene.

"I had lent a welder to Assetto [Motorsport] and, as I came out of the garage, I noticed a lot of people running and I assumed it was a race that had finished," said Rushforth. "But, when you got beyond the trucks, you could see the smoke and realised something is going on, and then you realise where you are and that it's coming close to where I was [set up], so you start walking a bit quicker."

Rushforth, who has been running his own Ginetta team for three years, believes



a battery charger may have been the cause of the blaze that occurred in his truck – which was also his accommodation. In the wake of the incident, which destroyed the truck, set-up equipment and awning, he was given a hotel room by Raceway Motorsport, among other offers, and Ginetta bought him new clothes.

"It's people's support that's added to the emotion," he added. "The offers of support have been amazing and I can't thank the circuit, marshals and fire brigade enough."

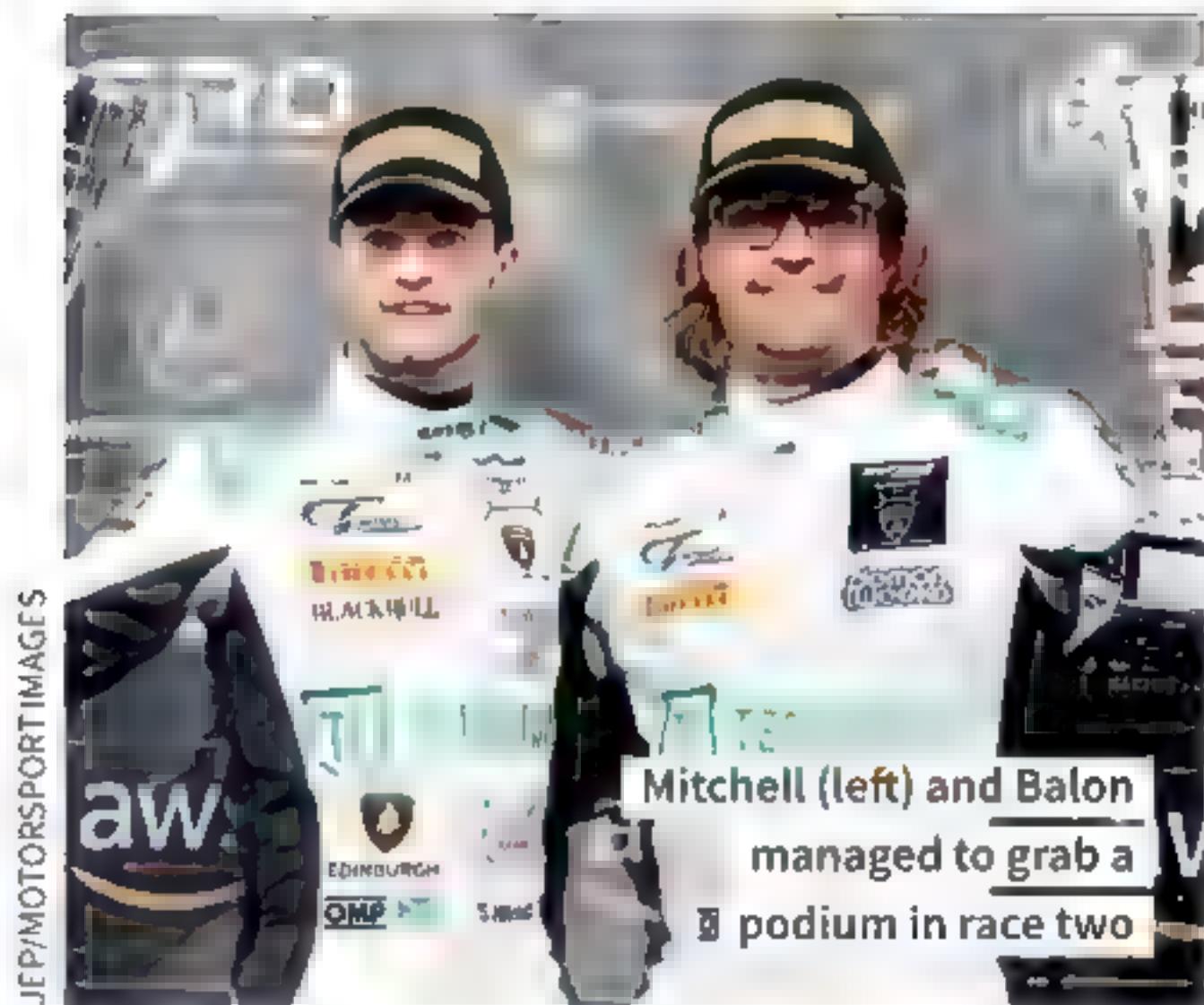
The team was also offered alternative

awning space, which allowed drivers Connor Grady and Will Orton the chance to compete in all three races on Sunday.

"The most important thing is no one got hurt and the second most important thing is the boys could race," said Rushforth. "I'm one of the smallest teams and it's my livelihood, this is my job and that [truck] was my mode of transport. I don't know what I'm going to do yet [for the future], but we will be at Croft [18-19 September] with two cars."

STEFAN MACKLEY

Mitchell/Balon 'marginal' following brake issue



BRITISH GT

British GT title challengers Sandy Mitchell and Adam Balon were "very marginal" on finishing the first of last weekend's two races at Snetterton due to a brake disc problem.

The Barwell Lamborghini pair finished fifth, with reigning champion Mitchell losing out to team-mate Dennis Lind late on after

repeatedly running wide into the Wilson hairpin.

"It happened quite suddenly so I was just trying to manage it as best I could," said Mitchell. "I was just struggling into that corner where it's downhill and you have to really rely on the brakes to slow the car."

But team commercial director Chris Needell said the car "couldn't have done more than another two laps

maximum" such was the extent of the issue, caused by debris that had started to shear the left-rear brake disc from the bellhousing.

"The debris started to shear the disc free, so it was a good job the race finished when it did!" he said.

Mitchell and Balon finished second in race two, and sit 19.5 points off the top of the standings.

JAMES NEWBOLD

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SUNOCO RACE FUELS

Low-budget single-seater concept launches

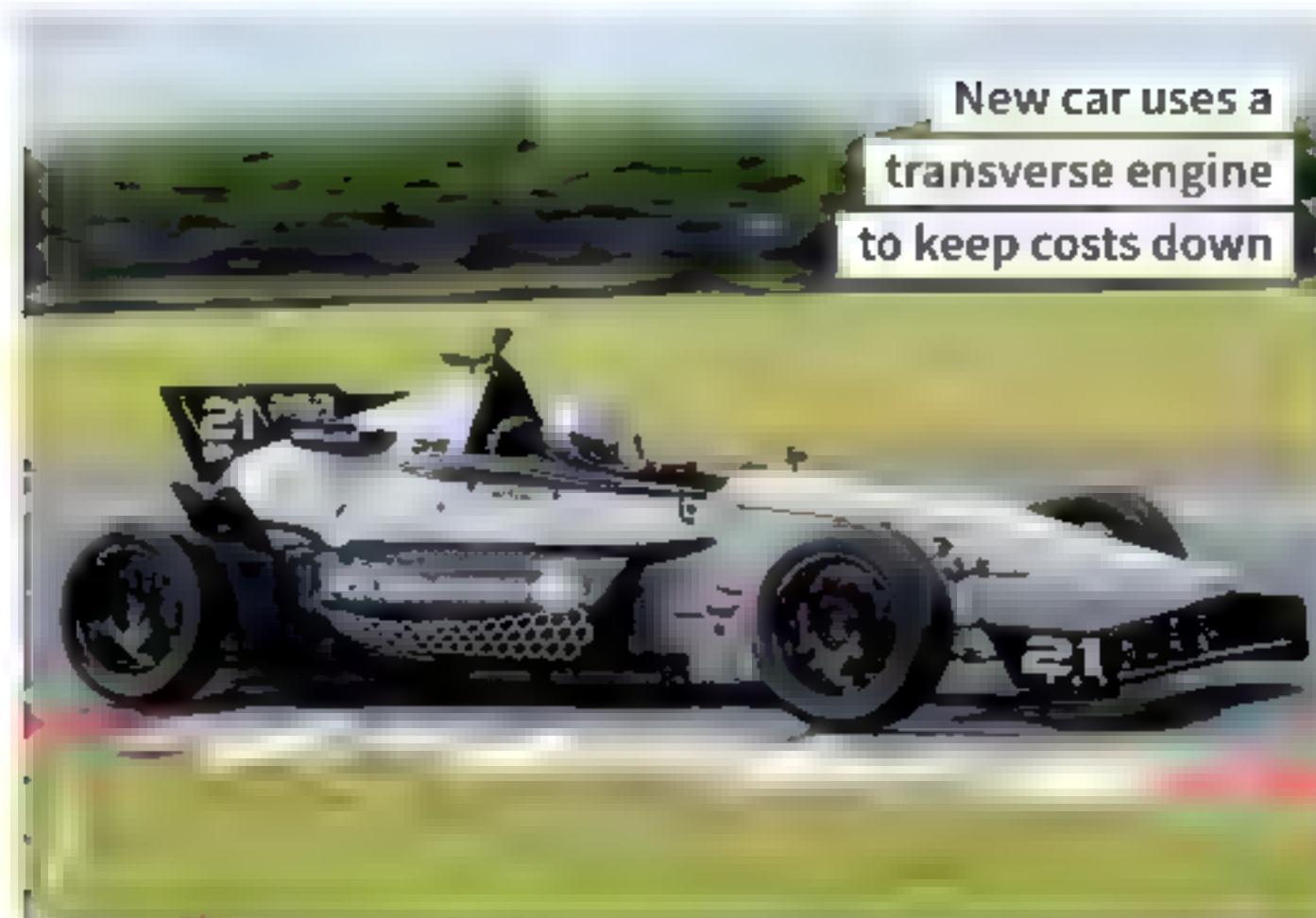
FORMULA FOUNDATION

A new, low-budget single-seater featuring a transversely mounted engine is set to be launched in Finland later this month and could form the basis of a series in the UK.

The Formula Foundation machine is the brainchild of Steve Wills, who has a long history of Formula Ford competition, including creating the Spirit cars. It takes inspiration from the Formula First series of the 1980s and 1990s, which also had a transverse engine, and Wills describes as being a "great concept".

He explained that the desire to save costs led to the unique styling of the machine, which has been tested by ex-F1 racer JJ Lehto in Finland and is powered by a 1.6-litre Zetec motor.

"The problem we first encountered was the cost of carbonfibre and the accessories," he said.



"We had to put the engine in transversely for financial reasons and for ease of maintenance. It's back to basics, simple to run and maintain.

"It's been designed and built to meet the FIA regulations and the whole car is about trying to get juniors back on track. It's frustrating to see there's no way into single-seater racing unless you're extremely wealthy. There's nothing wrong with F4, but not many people can afford that so we decided to develop a budget single-seater for them to race and have some fun in."

Wills is in talks with a major organising club about the possibility of running a UK series.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Combe GT Challenge prize money race's length extended

CASTLE COMBE RACING CLUB

Castle Combe's annual GT Challenge race will be extended to 45 minutes this year and will again offer £1000 to the winner.

The 18 September contest is once again being supported by GT racer Jordan Billinton and his ME7 company, with the class winners also each receiving £200.

Castle Combe Racing Club chairman Ken Davies paid tribute to Billinton's generosity and added that the increased race duration – up from half an hour – "makes it a little bit more special".

"The endurance racing format is tending to be very, very popular these

days," he added. "Bernie's V8s are joining as well so it's going to be a really eclectic mix of GT and sportscars. It's 75 minutes of track time [with half-hour qualifying], so it's pretty good value and you don't get purses like that outside of professional racing these days.

"If people dip their toe in the water at Castle Combe now, we might be getting someone for 2022 to compete in the GTs. GT racing is in Combe's DNA and it's a firm favourite for spectators."

There are due to be dedicated classes for GT3 and GT4 cars, as well as turbocharged machines.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



IN THE HEADLINES

PARKER'S NIGHTMARE EVENT

Team Parker Racing endured a miserable British GT weekend at Snetterton when a fuel rail sensor problem prevented Scott Malvern and Nick Jones's participation in race one, and brought race two to an early close after just three laps. The problem on the Porsche 911 GT3-R was first discovered on Saturday, but the team managed to fix it ahead of qualifying before the issue reappeared the next day.

PRAGA GOES INTERNATIONAL

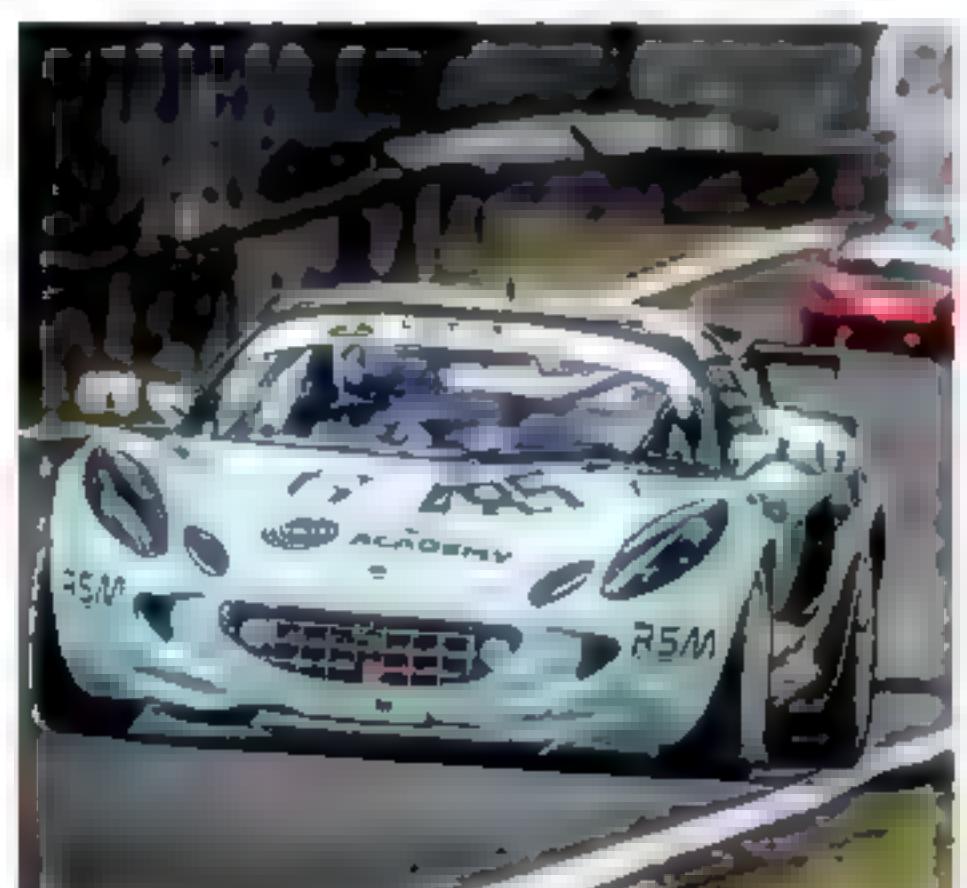
Praga Cars has confirmed the launch of its first three official international Praga Racing dealerships, in Australia/New Zealand, Belgium and California in the US. Mark Harrison, head of commercial operations, said: "We have been focused on establishing a successful racing programme in the UK in 2021, but our increased profile has led to incoming interest from established and experienced race teams and motoring businesses and accelerated our programme."

NEW RECRUITS AT FOX

Fox Motorsport will expand to a two-car line-up for this weekend's GT Cup event at Silverstone, with Britcar class champion Tim Docker and British GT race winner Jordan Albert racing a McLaren 570S GT4 in the GTH category. The pair will join the GTA class Ginetta G55 already raced by team regulars Ian Duggan and James Townsend.

GOODMAN'S GOOD WORK

Motorsport UK Academy driver Toby Goodman took both Lotus Cup Europe Production class wins last weekend at Zolder, with the championship on the support bill of the DTM in Belgium. The Briton has four wins out of four in the FIA-authorised championship this year and has also moved into third place overall.





What's in a name?

It was inevitable that British F3 would need a new identity amid the FIA's position on using 'F3', but doing so mid-season brings some benefits

STEFAN MACKLEY

When the news broke earlier this month that the BRDC British F3 Championship would be changing its name with immediate effect, it came as a surprise – and yet, in some ways, it almost didn't.

"From my point of view, it had bubbled along, which made you think they were not 100% convinced that it should be enforced," admits Jonathan Palmer, whose MotorSport Vision company runs the newly rebranded GB3 Championship.

By 'they', he refers to world motorsport governing body the FIA, and by 'bubbled along' he alludes to the fact that this had been an ongoing saga for a number of years. Autosport reported as much in 2018, when the FIA announced its intention to keep use of the Formula 3 title solely for championships under its remit and specifically its new Regional F3 concept.

While British F3 organisers ultimately decided against moving in that direction after advanced talks, they lobbied to keep its prestigious name and were effectively given a stay of execution, being allowed to use the title on a year-by-year basis. Although rumblings in the paddock died down in the intervening years, behind the scenes it was evident that the FIA was in fact 100% convinced that its original claim should be enforced, and championship organisers knew as early as the start of this year that a name change would finally be needed over the following months.

"We accepted the fact we would have to change it and we didn't

"We accepted we would have to change the name and didn't want to fall out with the FIA"

want to fall out with the FIA," says Palmer. "There was never any acrimony with the FIA; we had good discussions with them and agreed that we would change the name."

Perhaps the biggest surprise was that the championship had been allowed to keep it for as long as it did, or that the impending change had been kept under wraps to such an extent that many teams were caught on the hop. As one team boss admitted, they "found out minutes before" the new name was announced, even if they had been aware that the championship was struggling to keep the F3 title.

But the fact that the name change comes mid-season is the real shock. Why now? Why not wait until the season's end? To a certain extent, it almost feels like it undermines the series.

But, as Palmer says, "from the outside it might look like it doesn't make sense but it does from the commercial side of it".

There was never going to be a good time to change it – and only time will tell what ramifications, if any, there will be for the future of the championship caused by its rebranding – but changing the name mid-season is likely to lessen the blow than if it was done in the middle of winter, according to team bosses.

"Now is the time to do it: mid-season," says team owner Chris Dittmann. "They [drivers] know it's changed name and that it's just the name rather than over the winter wondering what else is changing. I think it's the right time."

It's a valid point and allows for a crossover period in the public eye rather than prospective new drivers wondering what GB3 is come the winter following an under-the-radar announcement.

As for the new name itself, while Palmer believes it to be "a great name", some teams and other voices in the paddock are less keen. It will take some getting used to, and perhaps the championship was always going to struggle to come up with something that conveyed what it is – specifically in terms of its pecking order in the single-seater hierarchy.

"We don't think it'll make a difference going forward – it's still a very good championship and it doesn't change anything," says Carlin's GB3 team manager Sam Waple.

Elite Motorsport boss Eddie Ives says: "I'm a bit nervous. We all know it's not what British F3 used to be, but the name had an appeal to foreign drivers. Whatever way you look at it, it was a good sell."

Ives raises an important point. The previous iteration of British F3, in which Ayrton Senna, Mika Hakkinen, Rubens Barrichello and Daniel Ricciardo made names for themselves – not forgetting Palmer too, who won the title in 1981 – ended in 2014 due to low grid numbers. When the BRDC F4 Championship was rebranded just days before the start of the 2016 season to British F3, it took only the name. Regardless, it was a name with history and prestige, one that motorsport fans of almost any age knew was synonymous with the pinnacle of junior single-seaters, and its demise is a sad blow for UK motorsport.

As the famous saying goes, 'what's in a name?' Over the next few years, the fate of the GB3 Championship could well be determined by it.

- I couldn't end this column without praising the bravery of officials, marshals, team members and the fire brigade for their actions on Saturday as they battled to put out a fire in one of the Ginetta GT5 Challenge team awnings, and subsequent support shown to team boss Alastair Rushforth. Motorsport's community spirit was also evident during the minute's silence in memory of Bernard Cottrell, who will be sadly missed. *

 PSO GRID REPORT



MacLennan dampens Gronkowski's unbeaten run

KNOCKHILL
SMRC
8 AUGUST

Jordan Gronkowski extended his Scottish Formula Ford 1600 points lead at Knockhill last weekend, despite seeing his unbeaten run halted by the returning Neil MacLennan.

Gronkowski did keep his 100% pole record intact, after topping the 12-minute qualifying session, which was delayed due to a major oil spill by a Fiesta ST Cup competitor. He duly led National FF1600 champion MacLennan at the start of the opener amid torrential rain. MacLennan, driving an ex-Jamie Thorburn Ray GR18, stuck with Gronkowski's Van Diemen throughout but couldn't quite get close enough to make a pass, with Gronkowski taking his fifth victory of the season by just over a second.

It was a similar story in race two, except the roles were reversed as MacLennan seized the advantage when Gronkowski missed a gear when the field was released from the safety car start. Gronkowski closed the gap

to 1.3s at the finish, but MacLennan claimed victory. Michael Gray (Graham Brunton Racing Ray) took a pair of thirds, despite battling a misted visor during his epic scrap with Neil Broome at the end of race one.

Despite sliding out of the lead amid a torrential downpour in the opening Mini Cooper Cup race, Michael Weddell increased his points lead over Chad Little with a pair of podiums. Both Weddell and team-mate Craig Blake suffered a gearbox failure in morning testing, but Weddell looked good for an overall race-one win — the faster turbocharged R53s started on slicks — before he understeered off at Clark's on the second lap, dropping him to 10th.

That elevated Neil Hose to the unenviable position of leader and, therefore, the first to encounter the treacherous standing water at the Hairpin. A fogged-up rear windscreen limited Hose's visibility, but he did just enough to beat Little for his maiden Cooper victory. Little made amends in race two when he passed Hose at Duffus to take his first win of the year, while Weddell fought through from 10th to secure third.

The reversed-grid finale was, by Scottish Mini standards, relatively tame as polesitter Dylan O'Donnell made an early break in what became a seven-lap race, reduced from nine due to diminishing light. Weddell buried his race-one woes with a fine second following a mistake by Blake at the Hairpin.

Steven Gray and Dave Colville arrived at Knockhill tied on points in the Fiesta ST Cup, but Gray left with a large margin after a disastrous weekend for Colville. The reigning champion slid into retirement at Clark's in race one before ending the second in almost identical circumstances.

Little claimed a first Mini win of the year



WEEKEND WINNERS

SCOTTISH FORMULA FORD 1600

Race 1 Jordan Gronkowski (Van Diemen JL012K)
Race 2 Neil MacLennan (Ray GR18)

SCOTTISH MINI COOPER CUP

Race 1 Neil Hose
Race 2 Chad Little
Race 3 Dylan O'Donnell

SCOTTISH FIESTA ST CUP

Races 1 & 2 Steven Gray

SCOTTISH CLASSIC SPORTS & SALOONS

Races 1 & 2 John Kinmond (Rover 3500)

SCOTTISH C1 CUP

Race 1 Paul Luti
Race 2 Dan Martin

For full results visit: speedhive.mylaps.com

In the Classics, John Kinmond took his Rover 3500 to two victories and, with it, the points lead after Bruce Mitchell (Lotus Europa) uncharacteristically spun out of an ultimately red-flagged race two at the Hairpin. Former Mini racer Oly Mortimer starred in his Class A Ford Fiesta, finishing an overall second and third.

Paul Luti and Dan Martin shared the Scottish C1 Cup victories in a pair of typically competitive races, with Scottish Motor Racing Club Esports champion Sam Corson taking third each time.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON



Buurman and Loggie shine through the spray

SNETTERTON
BRITISH GT
7-8 AUGUST

The 0.004 seconds splitting Dennis Lind and Yelmer Buurman in qualifying at Snetterton proved crucial in deciding the outcome of the second of last Sunday's British GT one-hour sprints, held on a freshly soaked track.

Buurman's silver lining to missing pole was to take the rolling start from the outside lane, setting him up perfectly to take the preferred wet line at the first turn. Barwell Lamborghini driver Lind knew it too and attempted to crowd Buurman's RAM Mercedes into Riches, but the unflappable Dutchman powered ahead.

Buurman was handed another crucial

advantage when the safety car was deployed just after he'd lapped Darren Turner's delayed GT4 Aston Martin, one of several victims of lap one antics that required barrier repairs at Turn 3.

With Turner an unwitting roadblock that Lind could not pass until the restart line, Buurman was gifted a 3.5s lead. It was extended still further when Lind made "a pure driving mistake" at Riches and ran wide in his haste to close, dropping behind Charlie Eastwood (TF Sport Aston Martin) and Barwell team-mate Sandy Mitchell.

That set reigning Pro-Am champions Buurman and Ian Loggie up for an overdue first win of 2021 after a puncture had dropped them from race-one contention. With series leaders Lind and Leo Machitski only scoring points for fourth – they

finished fifth on the road behind the guesting Eastwood and Ahmad Al Harthy – there are just 6.5 points between the top three crews with three races remaining.

"We always had good confidence in our capabilities, but everything has to go your way," said Buurman. "The first race we were a bit unlucky; Spa [hit by Richard Neary at the start] we were a bit unlucky; so let's hope the unlucky part is done and we have a good end to the season."

Buurman handed over to Loggie 8s ahead of Mitchell, who had cleared Eastwood with a clever cutback move on the exit of Agostini on lap 10 and then pumped in the fastest laps of the race to date. Mitchell's co-driver Adam Balon got to within 4s of the Mercedes, but never truly threatened.

A shower just before the pit window

NEW WINNERS TAKE TO THE TOP

Despite losing a nailed-on win to a penalty, Century Motorsport BMW duo Will Burns and Gus Burton stretched their GT4 championship lead as two new crews took to the top step of the podium at Snetterton.

Team Rocket RJN McLaren driver Alain Valente dominated qualifying for race one and had a clear lead over Burns when a flat left-front brought the Swiss to the pits on lap eight. RJN team-mates James Kell and Jordan Collard took up the fight, Kell close enough to Burns to ensure that Collard would jump Burton after the BMW had served its five-second success pitstop penalty from Spa.

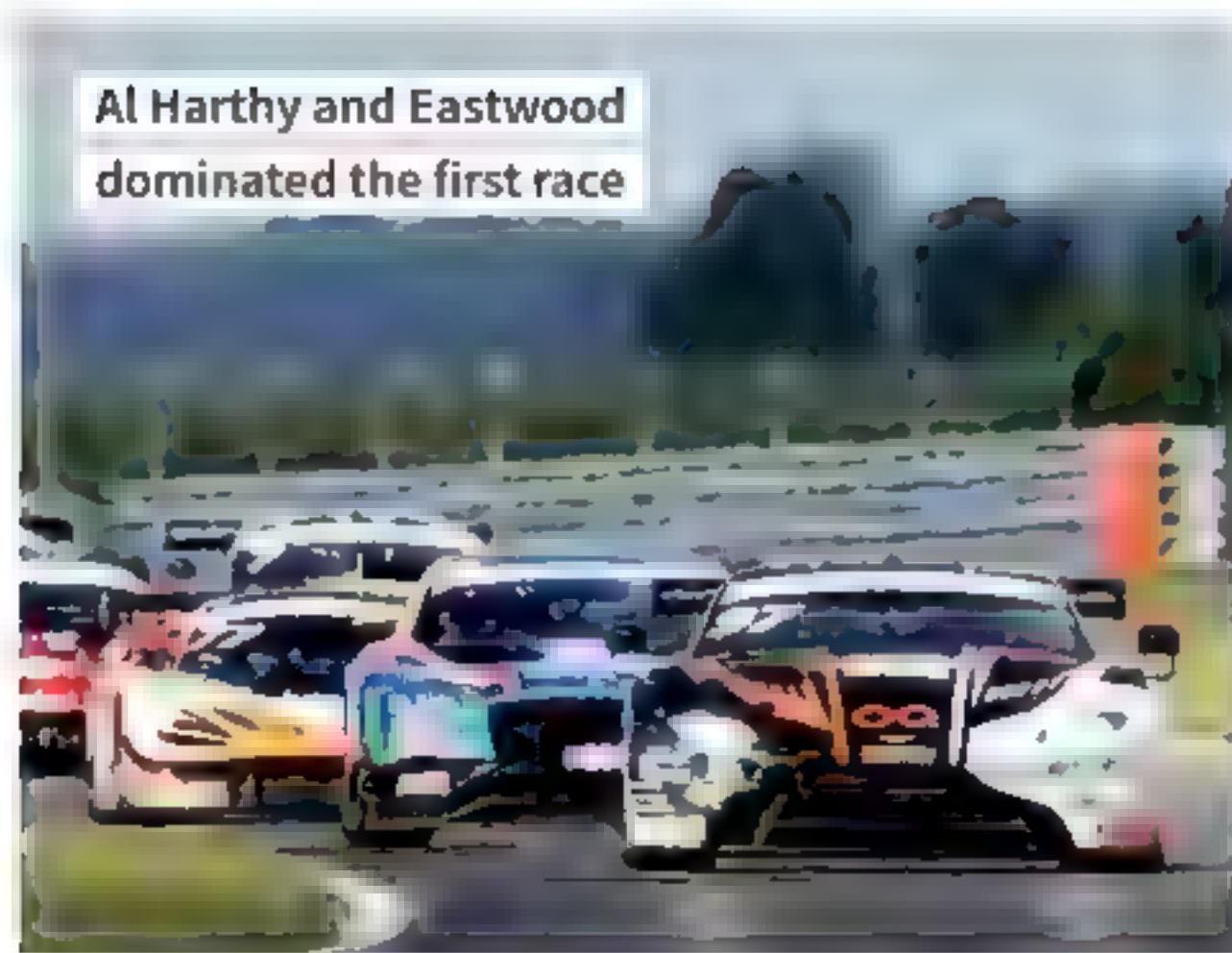
Such was his pace advantage that Collard would likely have won anyway, finishing over 21s clear as Burton – who didn't change tyres at his stop – came under heavy pressure from Pro-Am leader Scott McKenna's Speedworks Toyota.

McKenna was gifted fourth when Matt Cowley spun the Academy Motorsport Mustang started by Will Moore onto the Coram infield, then fought past Harry Hayek's third RJN McLaren. He cruised up behind Burton, but couldn't breach the BMW's staunch defences and settled for third. "I was shouting as I was crossing the line; it was three laps of white-line defending basically," said Burton.

McKenna was again in the thick of the action

at the start of race two. While diving around the outside of leader Darren Turner into Wilson, he made contact that punctured the Newbridge Aston's left-front and sent him wide, rejoining on a collision course with Jake Giddings (Ciceley Mercedes) and the Assetto Ginetta of Charlie Robertson, who was judged at fault by the officials.

Through the chaos, Collard led from Burton, while Cowley dropped to fifth behind Valente's team-mate Michael Benyahia and the second Century BMW of Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke after an off at Turn 3. It didn't look like being Academy's day but, after taking over from Cowley, Moore crucially followed Burns past Chris Salkeld (in for



Al Harthy and Eastwood dominated the first race

meant a switch to slicks was out of the question, but a clear dry line had emerged by the closing laps, bringing a charging Michael Igoe into play.

Igoe took over the WPI Motorsport Lamborghini started by Phil Keen one lap sooner than his rivals, and made full use of his warm rubber by ducking past Andrew Howard's Beechdean Aston fresh out of the pits at Riches, deposed Machitski at Agostini, and then disappeared into the distance. Machitski was powerless to prevent Al Harthy repeating the move he'd pulled one lap earlier on Howard around the outside of Coram into Murrays, ending up 36s down at the flag.

"We have a very good car underneath us in the dry and then quite the contrary in the wet," said Lind. Barwell's Chris Needell confirmed that the two cars were running slightly different set-ups, a by-product of limited data with the new Pirelli wet, only introduced at the Spa 24 Hours last month.

Al Harthy had only been behind the race two Machitski-Howard battle because of a 10s success penalty for utterly dominating race one. A full 0.84s clear of the field in qualifying after "one of the cleanest" laps of his life, the Omani made hay on his return to the series while Kelvin Fletcher's Paddock Motorsport Bentley in second held up a clearly faster Igoe.

"I think I could have been on pace with



Machitski (right) and Lind still lead the points

the [Al Harthy] Aston," said Igoe. "The Bentley backed me up in the corners and just used his acceleration for the straights."

In traffic on lap 12, Igoe sensed his chance at Agostini, but only succeeded in half-spinning Fletcher. With bodywork rubbing against his right-front tyre, Igoe stayed behind as both headed to the pits — "I thought if I didn't take advantage, there would be no penalty and it would just be a racing incident" — but a 10s stop/go came Keen's way regardless.

Machitski spent much of the first stint frustrated behind Morgan Tillbrook's Enduro Motorsport McLaren before capitalising on a mistake at Williams to pit from fourth, only for Lind to rejoin eighth after the 10s penalty carried over from Spa. But with Buurman (puncture) and Keen (penalty) falling out of contention, and Marcus Clutton (in for Tillbrook) black-flagged for ignoring a pit infringement drivethrough, Lind sensed a podium chance.

He passed Mitchell, who was suffering from brake problems that caused him to repeatedly run wide at Wilson, then capitalised on Adam being baulked on the final lap by GT4 battlers Jamie Stanley and Turner to claim third as Eastwood headed Fletcher's team-mate Martin Plowman. "This feels like a win to get the first podium with the team," said Plowman.

JAMES NEWBOLD

Gordon-Colebrooke), then was in line to profit when leader Burns had to serve a drivethrough penalty for a fractionally too short pitstop.

Sole remaining Pro-Am runner Nick Halstead (Fox McLaren) had taken advantage of a 14s shorter stop than anybody to vault into the lead, but Moore soon passed him and the Mustang drifted to victory on the increasingly drying track. Valente took too long to clear Kell to stand a chance of catching Salkeld for second.

Halstead's gradual slide nullified the impact of his 40s post-race penalty for a mechanic dropping a wheelnut into the fast lane during his stop.

JAMES NEWBOLD

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT3

Race 1 (32 laps) 1 Ahmad Al Harthy/Charlie Eastwood (Aston Martin Vantage); 2 Kelvin Fletcher/Martin Plowman (Bentley Continental) +8.268s; 3 Leo Machitski/Dennis Lind (Lamborghini Huracan Evo); 4 Andrew Howard/Jonny Adam (Aston Martin); 5 Adam Balon/Sandy Mitchell (Lamborghini); 6 Stewart Proctor/Lewis Proctor (McLaren 720S). **Fastest lap** Lind 1m48.557s (98.45mph). **Pole** Al Harthy/Eastwood. **Starters** 10.

Race 2 (27 laps) 1 Yelmer Buurman/Ian Loggie (Mercedes-AMG); 2 Mitchell/Balon +4.615s; 3 Phil Keen/Michael Igoe (Lamborghini); 4 Eastwood/Al Harthy; 5 Lind/Machitski; 6 Adam/Howard.

FL Igoe 2m01.592s (87.90mph). **P** Lind/Machitski. **S** 11.

Points 1 Machitski/Lind 117; 2= Howard & Loggie/Buurman 110.5; 4 Balon/Mitchell 97.5; 5 Igoe/Keen 93.5; 6 Adam 92.5.

GT4

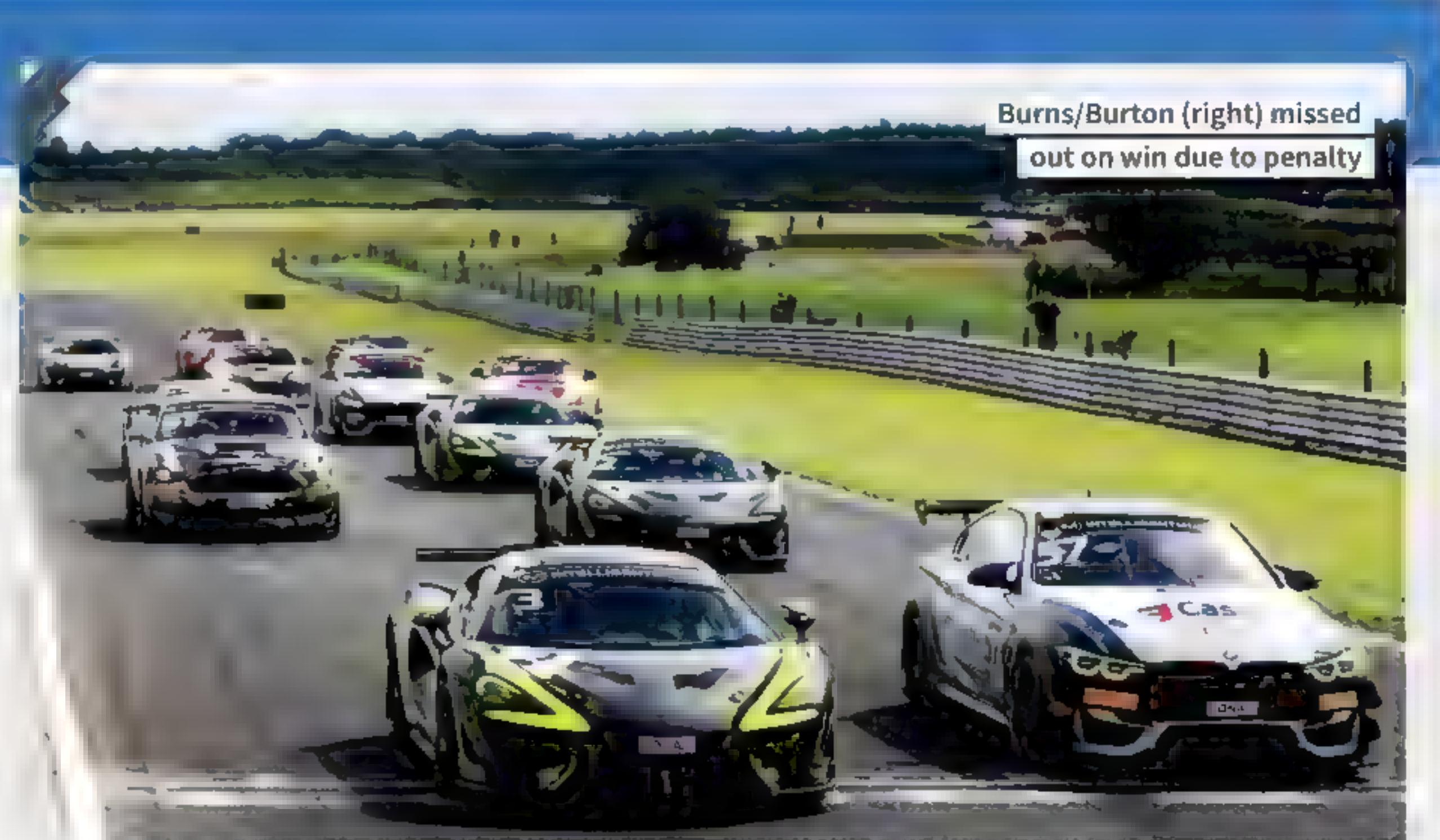
Race 1 (30 laps) 1 James Kell/Jordan Collard (McLaren 570S); 2 Will Burns/Gus Burton (BMW M4) +21.319s; 3 John Ferguson/Scott McKenna (Toyota GR Supra); 4 Katie Milner/Harry Hayek (McLaren); 5 Mark Sansom/Charlie Robertson (Ginetta G56); 6 Will Moore/Matt Cowley (Ford Mustang). **FL** McKenna 1m58.317s (90.33mph). **P** Alain Valente/Michael Benyahia (McLaren). **S** 13.

Race 2 (26 laps) 1 Cowley/Moore; 2 Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke/Chris Salkeld (BMW) +2.749s; 3 Benyahia/Valente; 4 Collard/Kell; 5 Burton/Burns; 6 Hayek/Milner. **FL** Burns 2m11.981s (80.98mph). **P** Robertson/Sansom. **S** 13

Points 1 Burns/Burton 143.5; 2 Salkeld/Gordon-Colebrooke 99; 3 Kell/Collard 77.5;

4 Matt Topham/Darren Turner 66.5,

5 Moore/Cowley 60; 6 Jack Brown/Ashley Marshall 58.5.



Burns/Burton (right) missed out on win due to penalty

Bearman stars as British F3 becomes GB3

SNETTERTON
MSVR
7-8 AUGUST

Oliver Bearman showed why he is dominating two of Europe's junior single-seater series when he made his mark at Snetterton in the first event since the mid-season rebranding of BRDC British F3 as the GB3 Championship.

The Briton, who leads the German and Italian Formula 4 championships, seamlessly returned to the category for the first time since the opening Brands Hatch round, and took a commanding victory in the first race after comfortably qualifying on pole in a rain-affected session.

Tom Lebon failed to capitalise on his front-row start, suffering a right-rear puncture in contact from Elite Motorsport team-mate Javier Sagrera into the Wilson hairpin. Brazilian Roberto Faria had already moved into second place and secured Fortec Motorsport a 1-2, with Roman Bilinski completing the podium in his Arden machine after an impressive rise from ninth.

The unusual qualifying result had left championship protagonists Zak O'Sullivan and Reece Ushijima down the pecking order, and the pair collided for the second time this season. Ushijima was deemed at fault for the lap-two collision, in which he made contact with O'Sullivan's left-rear into Wilson, and was handed a five-place grid penalty for the second race. Carlin driver O'Sullivan pitted to have a flat tyre replaced, while Ushijima was out with damaged suspension.

Bearman was set to double up in race two



after getting the jump on poleman Sebastian Alvarez off the line, but was cruelly denied another victory when a split radiator at the end of the opening lap eventually forced him into retirement. This allowed Alvarez to take his maiden win in the series, the Hitech GP driver sustaining race-long pressure from O'Sullivan and Bilinski.

After starring at the championship's Spa visit, where he took his first win in the series, Bilinski continued his impressive form and finished on the top step again in the full reversed-grid third race. Fourth at the start, he was second by the end of the opening lap, before making a move on Mikkel Grundtvig on the exit of Riches.

The Fortec driver became something of a cork in the bottle for the chasing pack as first Sagrera and then O'Sullivan both had turns probing the Dane's defences, but it was Bearman who broke through first, after climbing from 11th on the grid.

O'Sullivan then pulled off a sensational pass around the outside of Sagrera into Riches for fourth before displacing Grundtvig with a similar move at Brundle a lap later. Third then turned into second when, with rain falling, Bearman went off at Riches on the penultimate lap. Faria was promoted to third and Alvarez fourth.

O'Sullivan now heads Carlin team-mate Christian Mansell by 99 points with three events remaining.

The middle Ginetta GT5 Challenge contest proved to be the most compelling track action all weekend, with none of the races requiring the use of a safety car despite some challenging conditions. John Bennett disposed of leader Will Rochford on lap six of 10 at Wilson, but the delay to both allowed table-topper Josh Steed the chance to move into second around the outside at Turn 3.

Steed's good work was negated just a lap



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEP
motorsport
IMAGES

WEEKEND WINNERS

GB3 CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 (10 laps) 1 Oliver Bearman; 2 Roberto Faria +1.141s; 3 Roman Bilinski; 4 Sebastian Alvarez; 5 Branden Oxley; 6 Ayrton Simmons. **Fastest lap** Faria 1m45.571s (101.24mph). **Pole** Bearman. **Starters** 18. **Race 2 (10 laps)** 1 Alvarez; 2 Zak O'Sullivan +0.390s; 3 Bilinski; 4 Tom Lebbon; 5 Frederick Lubin; 6 Bryce Aron. **FL** O'Sullivan 1m44.921s (101.86mph). **P** Alvarez. **S** 18. **Race 3 (10 laps)** 1 Bilinski; 2 O'Sullivan +6.185s; 3 Faria; 4 Alvarez; 5 Lebbon; 6 Simmons. **FL** Bart Horsten 1m45.252s (101.54mph). **P** Mikkel Grundtvig. **S** 18. **Points** 1 O'Sullivan 347; 2 Christian Mansell 248; 3 Reece Ushijima 231; 4 Faria 230; 5 Bilinski 208; 6 Simmons 199.

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Race 1 John Bennett
Races 2 & 3 Josh Steed

GINETTA GT ACADEMY

Races 1, 2 & 3 Angus Whiteside

ELISE TROPHY

Jason McInulty (Elise S3)

500cc F3

Race 1 Simon Dedman (Cooper Mk10)
Race 2 Chris Wilson (Cooper Mk10)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

later, when he dropped to fifth after running wide at Riches as rain arrived, with race-one winner Bennett also sliding wide at Wilson and promoting Rochford back into the lead.

The recovering Steed and Will Aspin both then found a way past, before Steed was forced wide at Agostini on the penultimate lap after contact. Aspin won on the road, but was demoted to second behind Steed for his actions, while Bennett was third after helping Rochford wide on the final lap.

It was Bennett's turn to suffer a final-lap mishap in race three, spinning at Riches in appalling conditions after shadowing Steed throughout. Mikey Doble and Aspin completed the rostrum.

Both Connor Grady and Will Orton, whose cars are run by Alastair Rushforth Motorsport, were able to race despite a fire in the team's awnings that caused a halt to Saturday's proceedings (see News). Their best result was an eighth for Grady.

After tasting outright victory in the Ginetta GT Academy for the first time at the previous Donington Park round, Angus Whiteside was in sensational form to claim a hat-trick of wins in Norfolk, his smallest winning margin being 3.6s in race one.

Hardest hit by the delay to Saturday's proceedings was the Elise Trophy, with the championship's two 20-minute races trimmed down to just one, which was headed by Jason McInulty.

STEFAN MACKLEY

SNETTERTON'S HISTORY COMES BACK TO LIFE



Despite BRDC British F3's rebrand into the GB3 Championship, the 'Formula 3' name was still on the timetable last weekend at Snetterton to help celebrate the venue's 70th anniversary.

The 500cc F3 category was one of the key attractions at the Norfolk circuit when it first opened its doors in 1951, and an eclectic mix of cars were in action last weekend at a venue with which leading light Jim Russell – who claimed F3 titles in 1955-57 – became synonymous as founder of the world's first racing drivers' school in 1956.

Nearly seven decades later, things came full circle when the Cooper Mk10 in which Russell took the crown in 1956 and 1957 claimed another victory in the opening race on Sunday in the hands of Simon Dedman. Not only that, but it was the fireman's first-ever car racing win. He only started competing in 2018 at the wheel of a Waye, before rebuilding Russell's Cooper last year during the COVID-19 lockdown.

"It's been in a few collections and there was a lot of work to do to get it back on the race circuit," said Dedman, whose win was popular with the 500 Owners Association paddock. "I couldn't bring myself to alter the chassis [and add a rollbar].



Dedman took his first win in ex-Russell car

"I like rebuilding cars. The Waye came up for sale, and I rebuilt it and thought let's give it a go [in 2018] and I found this club, which I'd never heard of before. These are fabulous little cars."

In atrocious conditions, Dedman could only qualify eighth, but soon charged through in the opening 15-minute race, held in the dry, and was second by the end of the first tour. After chasing poleman George Shackleton's Cooper Mk11, Dedman made his move down the inside into Agostini on lap two. "I just outbraked him but then I was going as fast as I could," he said.

The gap never stretched to more than a few lengths, but victory was assured when first a safety car was called and then a red flag shown after Chas Reynolds's Kieft CK53 ended up off the track at Agostini. Shackleton held onto second, while Chris Wilson took third. He had finished fourth on the road, but was promoted after Darrell Woods – who had recovered from an opening lap off at Wilson – was penalised for overtaking Wilson under the safety car.

Dedman couldn't quite replicate his success in the second contest, despite starting from pole, in a race held on a greasy track after heavy periods of rain. Wilson was the man to beat. He moved into second behind Shackleton at the end of the opening tour, before making his move for the lead a lap later.

As Shackleton dropped back and eventually into retirement, Woods's Staride Mk3 moved into second ahead of a recovering Dedman, but neither could do anything about Wilson on a weekend when a bit of Snetterton's history came back to life.

STEFAN MACKLEY



**SILVERSTONE
750MC
7-8 AUGUST**

Scott Mittell celebrated his birthday in style on Saturday, overturning Bikesports rival Joe Stables's morning advantage to win race two in his eponymous Suzuki Hayabusa-powered car. The icing on his cake was Dan Gore's first F1000 victory since 2019 in his Mittell Racing-run Jedi.

Double champion Stables (Radical PR6) had the handling advantage to resist Mittell in the Bikesports opener, but

a heavy shower provided a tyre quandary in race two. Those who opted for slicks, including Stables, had to start from the pitlane but he still finished second, half a lap adrift of Mittell, whose tweaks between the races dialled in dad Ian's chassis design.

Lee Morgan sliced Elliott Mitchell's F1000 points lead from 25 to 15 by winning the opener, then went top after Mitchell retired from the sequel, but he didn't win it. Gore caught Morgan napping when the field was released from a Code 60 after Robert Welham, unsighted, could not

avoid clipping front-row starter James Hills's car, which had stalled on the grid.

Aided by a full-course caution as the pit window opened, Andy Marston led the RoadSports 45-minute enduro throughout in his bewinged BMW E46 M3, this season's major upgrades finally doing the trick. "The car's been a bit of a pig but it felt mega for the first time," he said. "There was a bit of understeer at the beginning but, when the rain came, it went." A 1m13.32s (90.83mph) class lap record doubled his joy.

Other E36 M3s led the chase, with Chris Mills/David Gardner 10 seconds behind, but well clear of Matthew Weymouth. The latter's sparring partner Tony Rodgers (SEAT Supercopa) and Neil Savage – who spun his Lotus Elise at Farm on the opening lap, then again onto the Hangar Straight – were both excluded for overtaking under yellow flags, promoting Nick Vaughan's trusty Audi A3, with 250,000 miles on the clock, to fourth.

Buoyed by stemming Hot Hatch leader Alistair Camp's unbeaten record in the final leg of Brands Hatch's triple-header, Philip Wright repeated first time out. Poleman Camp started the second cautiously too, but battled ahead on lap four of nine, keeping Wright behind to notch his seventh win from nine. Chris Smith took third again to round out an all-Honda Civic podium, with Ryan Polley staving off Jack Ashton's rapid





MG Metro in a four-car scrap for fourth. Lee Deegan outdragged polesitter Adam Shepherd at both Type R Trophy starts, but the former Civic Cup and BMW M3 champion – back with the 750 Motor Club after a Ginetta G55 GT campaign – demoralised Deegan by breezing past and leading home. With the ABS light on second time out, Deegan tried a reset, but the brake balance was awry, kicking his EP3's tail out as chasers ganged up. Shepherd thus extended his run to seven wins from eight. Novice Luke Rosewell and Clio 182 convert Mark Balmer netted a third apiece.

Previous champions Danny Hands (AHS) and Craig Pollard (GAC) repeatedly passed each other in the Formula Vee opener. Hands, joint third in the points behind Pollard, took victory by just 0.20s as veteran Ian Buxton (GAC) progressed rapidly to third. Reigning champion and series leader James Harridge's Maverick refused to run in qualifying, forcing him to start at the back of the 32-car grid. Nineteenth inside a lap, he carved through to fourth, and could have made the podium had the safety car not picked him up instead of the leaders. The crocodile was released with time for a single lap.

Saturday's finale promised a repeat until two cars tangled at Village on lap one, triggering a red flag. Although the drivers escaped injury, with medics in attendance,

both ambulances displaced and the circuit curfew imminent, a restart was impossible.

Sunday's sprint races majored on one-make double-headers, always busy on a circuit that compresses tight packs three times per lap. In the first Clio 182 contest, Jack Kingsbury moved to sole leadership of the championship with a double win, to Jack Dwane's fourth and fifth. Jason Pelosi bounced back from his Brands roll to hound Kingsbury, and encouragingly led race two for a couple of laps in his Deranged Motorsport car. Scott Edgar led their pursuit both times.

Reigning Toyota MR2 champion and points leader Aaron Cooke outran four-time title winner Shaun Traynor initially as Mk3 Roadsters congregated at the sharp end of the grid. Traynor evened honours in a more unruly second stanza. Both were overtaken by Nick Williamson under yellow flags with Rhys Dorman's Roadster in the gravel before Club. Williamson was excluded, and Paul Cook sanctioned for outbraking himself and nerfing Mk2 standout Cam Walton – third in the opener – into a spin at Club. Adam Lockwood completed a Roadster 1-2-3 ahead of Sam Harper (Mk2).

Irishman Niall Bradley bagged a BMW Car Club brace, overcoming fast starter Rick Kerry's One Series V8 second time out. How he saved "a really, really, big moment" exiting Club he'll never know, however. Brad

WEEKEND WINNERS

FORMULA 1

Race 1 Joe Stables (Radical PR6)
Race 2 Scott Mittell (Mittell MC-41R)

F1000

Race 1 Lee Morgan
Race 2 Dan Gore

ROADSPORTS

Andy Marston (BMW E46 M3)

HOT HATCH

Race 1 Philip Wright (Honda Civic Type R)
Race 2 Alistair Camp (Honda Civic)

TYPE R TROPHY

Races 1 & 2 Adam Shepherd

FORMULA VEE

Danny Hands (AHS Dominator Mk2)

CLIO 182

Races 1 & 2 Jack Kingsbury

TOYOTA MR2s

Race 1 Aaron Cooke (Roadster)
Race 2 Shaun Traynor (Roadster)

BMW CAR CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Niall Bradley (E46 M3)

CLUB ENDURO

Joe Lock/Ash Hicklin (BMW E46 M3)

BERNIE'S V8s/CALM PORSCHE TROPHY

James Plant (Austin-Healey 106)

For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

Sheehan (E46), a retiree in the opener, and Michael Cutt (who, from the back, had passed half the pack by Abbey only to find the gravel trap in his E36) charged to third and fourth in the finale. Gary Burstow and Ben Pearson scored class doubles.

Radical converts Joe Lock and Ash Hicklin won the 100-minute Club Enduro in Tim Gray Motorsport's BMW M3, breaking Carl Swift and Rob Baker's monopoly. Baker's SEAT Leon Supercup needed new front brake pads at the mandatory stop – handily during a safety car – but an obstinate wheelnut left them fighting for third, behind Marston's M3. Without the fastest lap point, Oulton Park's finale will decide the crown's destiny. Three-time Le Mans 24 Hours racer David Mercer (M3) finished fourth.

From sixth on the grid, James Plant burst his caricature Healey-Chevrolet through a mighty miscellany to win the Bernie's V8s race. Adam Southgate's Boxster bested the concurrent Porsche Trophy posse, while British Touring Car Championship ace Josh Cook thundered Pete Hallford's Boss Mustang back to sixth post-stop.

MARCUS PYE

T Type Bentley was on pole for BDC event in 1977 and Eastwick Jr has now delivered a win



Eastick finally finishes his father's Bentley job

SILVERSTONE
BDC
7 AUGUST

Ben Eastick finally achieved a lifetime ambition at the Bentley Drivers Club's 73rd race meeting at Silverstone last Saturday.

Eastick's father Barry started his incredible Bentley T Type special from pole in the 1977 running of the Times Trophy, but crashed in the race, halted development on the low-line special, and later sold it. At the time, young Eastick Jr made a promise to one day get it back and prove that it works.

Forty years on, Ben finally acquired the car and started having it rebuilt with the prime target of winning the Times Trophy and, 44 years on from his father's accident, he concluded a piece of family business.

Despite a major penalty at the start

of the handicap race, Eastick had little trouble in scything up the order and taking control from long-time leader Chris Mann in his glorious Alfa Romeo 8C Monza and Clive Morley's Bentley. "It's taken three years to get it up and running," said Eastick after a very emotional result. "On the day he sold it, I promised my dad that one day I'd buy it back and prove that it works."

As ever, Morgans played a big part in the programme, with a double-header for the Morgan Challenge as well as a strong contingent in the Classic Challenge. In a car that has been in the family since before he was born, Olly Bryant won the Morgan Challenge opener in the +8 that his father Grahame bought new from the Morgan factory in 1977. On a rare race outing for the car, Bryant had to work his way around Bill Lancashire before easing clear for victory.

Later in the day, the story was much the same. Lancashire made the running over the first couple of laps and then, after an exploratory foray on the previous tour, Bryant made it stick into Copse and edged away, despite a lot of traffic over the second half of the race. Lancashire did well to stay within six seconds of the winner.

Roger Whiteside rounded out the first podium, while Oliver Pratt charged to fourth after starting at the back of the grid. When a mechanical disaster struck his ex-Matthew Wurr +8 in qualifying, he borrowed his brother William's +4 for the races. Pratt went one better to take a podium in the second race.

This was the day when Ecurie Classic Racing really came of age as a mighty 36-car field raced for 40 minutes and delivered fine entertainment. It was a great advert for the series for pre-66 sports, GTs and saloons as it heads towards the conclusion of its debut season.

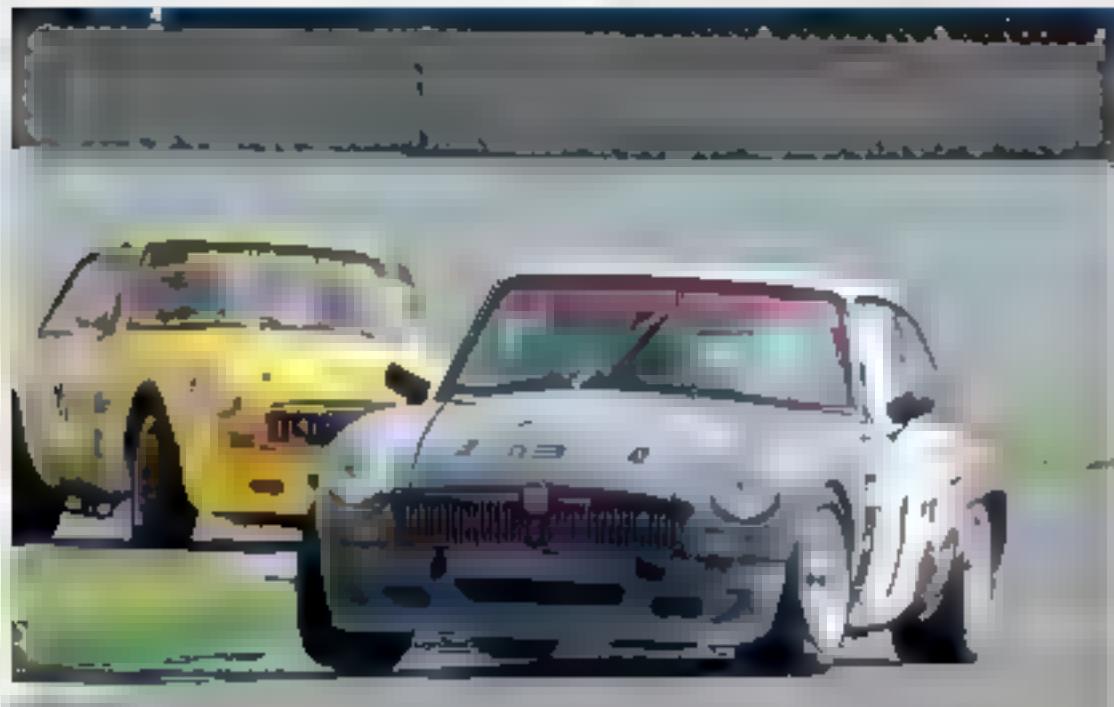
Allan Ross-Jones set the mark in his Triumph TR4 and was able to pull clear for a stylish win. But in his wake things were far from settled, and a great battle raged over the podium places for much of the race. Over the final laps, the oversteering Austin-Healey 100/4 of Oliver and Nicholas Harris tigerted ahead of Tom Andrew in his even more sideways Alfa Romeo Giulia.

The MG BCV8 contenders put on two good races as the V8 brigade fought at the head of the pack. In the opener, series dominator Ollie Neaves asserted his authority as he established a 10s advantage over the second-place battle between Neil Fowler and Robert Spencer.

Later in the afternoon, Neaves did it again, but it took him a couple of laps to



WEEKEND WINNERS



TIMES TROPHY FOR BENTLEYS AND PRE-WAR CARS

Ben Eastick (Bentley T Type)

MORGAN CHALLENGE

Races 1 & 2 Olly Bryant (+8)

ECURIE CLASSIC RACING

Allan Ross-Jones (Triumph TR4)

BCV8 CHAMPIONSHIP

Races 1 & 2 Ollie Neaves (B GTV8, above)

CLASSIC CHALLENGE

Jack Bellinger (Morgan +4)

FISCAR

Tim Llewellyn/Oliver Llewellyn (Allard J2, below)

BENTLEY HANDICAP

William Elbourn (3/4½)

ALLCOMERS RACE

Gwyn Pollard (Crossle 9S)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

depose early leader Spencer. Fowler dropped back and Spencer later retired, so Ian Prior moved up to second from Russell McCarthy, who had charged up from the back of the grid after failing to finish the opening race.

Jack Bellinger had a scare on the opening lap of the Classic Challenge when a rain shower caught him out. But he had such a big lead when he arrived at Becketts that he was able to spin and get going again without losing the lead for more than a few yards. Bellinger's Morgan +4 then kept the later Morgan 'Babydoll' of Craig Hamilton-Smith at arm's length, before young Jack Smith was the first non-Morgan in third in the family MGA.

PAUL LAWRENCE



A VERY SPECIAL BENTLEY The stunning Bentley T Type Special developed by Ben Eastick's father Barry in the 1970s is the most advanced racing Bentley of the era, although it's based on a prototype Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow chassis. "Dad liked the look of the Lister Monza Jaguar, so he based it as an offset single-seater but he also, obviously, liked D-types, so the fairing at the back was like a short-nosed D-type," said Ben of the six-litre V8 Bentley supercharged device.



DEAN'S ONE-OFF MG Back in 1954, former works MG racer Dick Jacobs decided to build an MG special for sportscar racing. He took the last MG YB saloon chassis and developed a one-off, using a tubular spaceframe to support the body. There were plans to build more, but only one was ever finished, Jacobs racing it at Goodwood and internationally. The Dick Jacobs Special has a near continuous racing history and is now owned by Stuart Dean, who finished third in class in FISCaR.



WALES'S FINEST There are few Gilberns racing these days, and one of only three currently active in the UK is the 1964 1800GT of Mike Lamplough. The Welsh-built low-volume sportscar was based heavily on MGB running gear, engine and gearbox, while the rear wings were developed from the Austin A40. Lamplough bought his car as a box of bits and rebuilt it as a 2020 lockdown project. "This is its fourth race meeting," said Lamplough, who finished sixth in class in Ecurie Classic at Silverstone.

Walker strolls back into FF1600 battle

BRANDS HATCH
BRSCC
7-8 AUGUST

In a season of momentum shifts, Alex Walker regained the impetus in National Formula Ford at Brands Hatch last weekend, with two wins sandwiching a success for Rory Smith.

Festival winner Smith, contesting only a part-season alongside historic commitments, qualified his B-M Racing Medina on pole, but was jumped by points leader Max Esterson (Low Dempsey Racing Ray). Running a compromise set-up for changeable conditions, Esterson struggled for ultimate pace on the drying track and led a train of cars headed by Smith, Anglesey double winner Chris Middlehurst (Team Dolan Van Diemen) and Walker's Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum.

The pursuers exchanged places, but neither Smith nor Middlehurst could breach Esterson's defence before Walker made a couple of surges around the outside at Paddock Hill Bend, then dived inside Esterson at the same corner.

Despite lairy moments at a greasy Surtees, Walker led the sequel until heavier rain arrived and Smith slithered



ahead just before a mid-race safety car. Middlehurst and Jamie Sharp later followed, Sharp passing Middlehurst at Druids on the penultimate lap for a B-M Racing 1-2.

Walker reasserted himself in the dry finale, jumping from third on the reversed grid to lead by Graham Hill Bend, then streaking clear as team-mate Tom Mills kept Middlehurst and co at bay with a strong defensive drive to second, his best finish yet. Esterson climbed to sixth from 15th on the grid after spinning in race two. "It's getting pretty tight at the top again," said Walker. "We've had a tricky couple of rounds, so to get back up there is nice."

The Caterham Seven UK title fight also remains close after Will Smith, Stephen Nuttall and Gordon Sawyer split three entertaining races. Smith cut back inside polesitter Sawyer at Paddock to take the opener, while set-up tweaks returned Nuttall to the fore on Sunday. After being disqualified for passing under yellow flags, a determined Sawyer charged from the back of the grid to win race three from Henry Heaton. Nuttall and Heaton continue to head the points, but dropped scores bring Smith within striking distance.

Rod Birley scored career win numbers 692 and 693 in Super Saloons, surviving

Wheatley reaps rewards on home soil at Croft

CROFT
BARC
7-8 AUGUST

Dominic Wheatley enjoyed a strong weekend on home soil at Croft to move into the lead of the Mini Challenge Trophy standings with two rounds left to run.

Wheatley qualified on the front row of the grid for race one alongside

first-time polesitter Lewis Saunders, but it was Louie Capozzoli who took the flag first after battling his way through from fourth on the grid. But then Capozzoli's move on Saunders for the lead was deemed to have been too forceful and he was handed a penalty that gave Joe Wiggin the win from Nicky Taylor and Harry Nunn, with Wheatley fourth.

Taylor then went one better in race two to earn his maiden victory ahead of Wheatley and Nunn. Wheatley therefore takes over the points lead from Matt Hammond, who could only manage a best finish of 12th as he returned to action after his Oulton Park incident two weeks earlier.

Wins in the CNC Heads Sports and Saloons were shared by Jon Woolfitt and Paul Rose after two races affected by some of the worst of Saturday's weather. Woolfitt's Spire led the opening contest from start to finish, with a number of the fancied runners hitting trouble. Paul Dobson (Locost) gave chase in the early

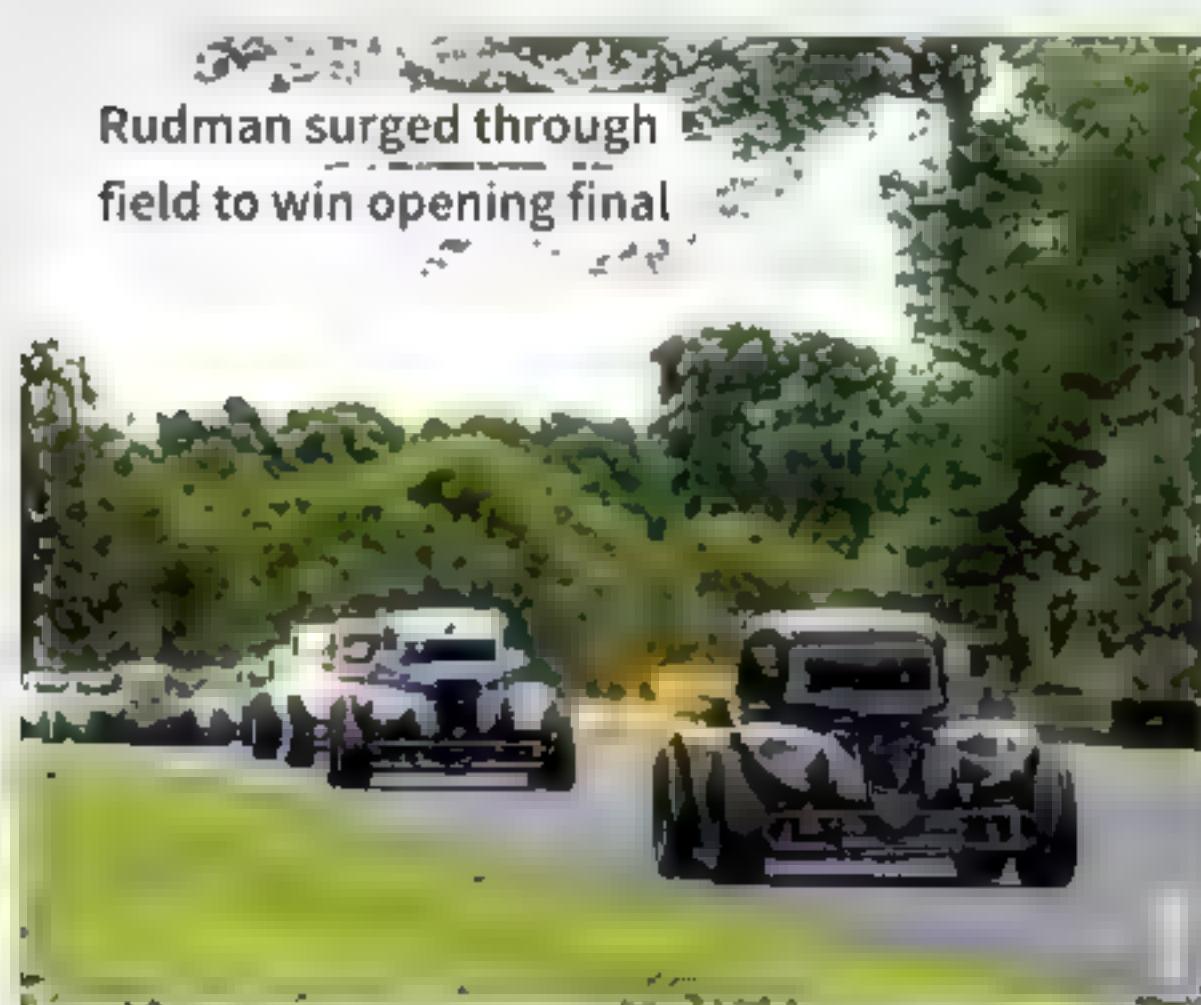
stages before dropping back in worsening conditions, with Robert Wakelin taking his Peugeot 205 to third.

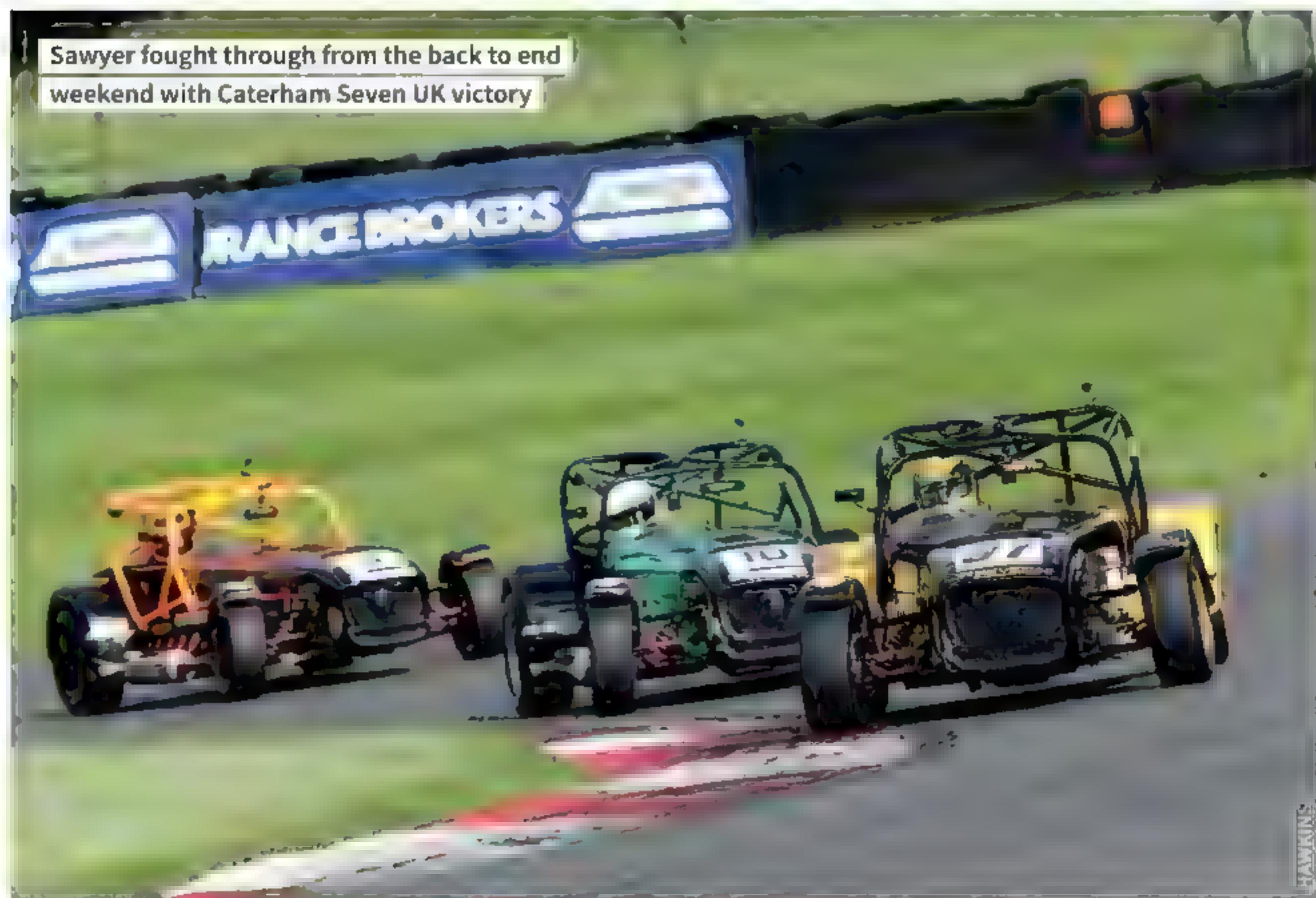
After retiring in race one, Rose headed a Saker 1-2 in race two ahead of Steve Harris, with Dobson rounding out the podium and Woolfitt – who had again started from pole – having to settle for fourth.

The weekend action for the Legends started in dramatic fashion when a heavy off for Mike Schlup on the run to the Jim Clark Esses led to the first of six races being red-flagged, with victory going to Jack Parker. Race two went to points leader Miles Rudman as he held off the race-long challenge of Will Gibson, and Rudman then stormed through from 23rd to win the first final ahead of Parker and Gibson.

John Mickel and Parker won the following two heats, and Gibson took the second final, battling ahead of Rudman and Mickel on the final lap to complete a near back-to-front drive from 25th on the grid.

Although Ben Winrow took the early





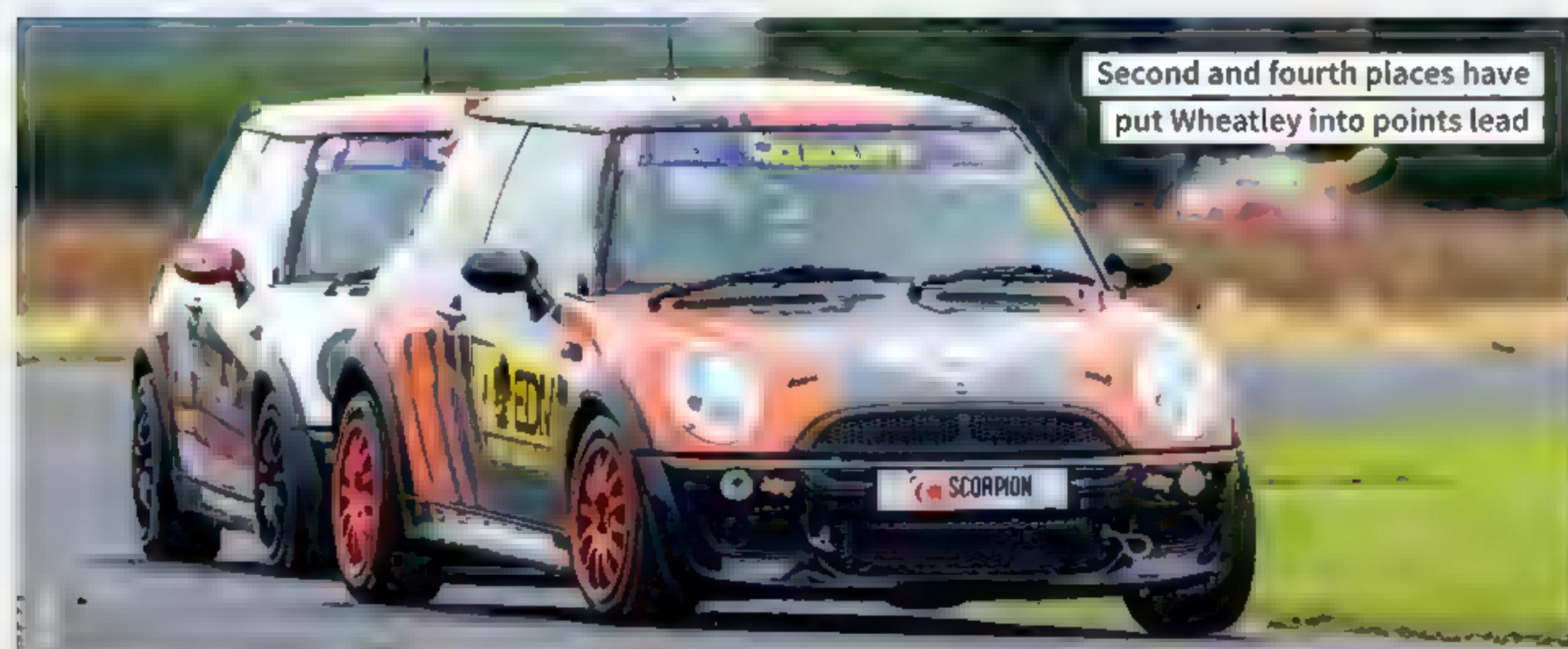
late safety-car periods each time to head Alex Sidwell's Holden Commodore VF and the BMW E36 of Ronan Bradley. Winning the Tin Tops section on both occasions – despite a spin in the opener – was Chris Bassett, his newly built Peugeot 306 GTI on only its second outing. In drying conditions, Bassett qualified second overall and threatened a giantkilling show as he briefly led before the more powerful saloons got their slicks up to temperature. The busy Bassett then led home David Clark's Renault 5 GT Turbo in both Track Attack races.

Zeo Prototype Cup spoils were shared by the Chiron of Bikesports champion Charles

Hall, on his Zeo debut, and Mike Jenvey's eponymous machine, which was hampered by overheating in the pair's race-one duel.

Lewis Thompson has now won six consecutive Caterham 310R races since missing the season opener to focus on his A-levels. Two commanding Brands successes over Pete Walters, after Andy Lees spun from the lead of race one, came despite qualifying seventh in tricky conditions. Taylor O'Flanagan did enough to edge two close-fought Roadsport contests ahead of the squabbling Adam West, Hugo Bush and Tom Cockerill.

MARK PAULSON



lead in the wet Caterham SigMax/Sigma 150 opener, Harry Senior got ahead at the start of lap two and went on to secure a comfortable victory, with Harry Cramer overhauling Winrow for second on the penultimate tour. Things would be much tighter in Sunday's dry second encounter, where Winrow held off the challenge of Jamie Ellwood and Senior to snare the win.

James McCall led the first Caterham Sigma 135 encounter from start to finish, although David Read – recovering from an earlier moment at Clervaux – was

closing in when the race was red-flagged. The pair then traded the lead throughout race two before Read prevailed to take a slender victory.

Before Sunday's track action began, the C1 Racing Series grid completed a lap of the circuit in memory of Angela Lucas, after her tragic death at Snetterton last month. Late drama for Alistair May and Chris Parkes in the three-hour race allowed John and Matthew Davies to take the win with just minutes to go.

MATT SALISBURY

WEEKEND WINNERS

BRANDS HATCH

NATIONAL FORMULA FORD

Races 1 & 3 Alex Walker (Spectrum 011c)

Race 2 Rory Smith (Medina JL18)

CATERHAM SEVEN UK

Race 1 Will Smith

Race 2 Stephen Nuttall

Race 3 Gordon Sawyer

CMMC SUPER SALOONS/SOUTHERN TIN TOPS

Races 1 & 2 Rod Birley (Ford Escort WRC)

TRACK ATTACK RACE CLUB

Races 1 & 2 Chris Bassett (Peugeot 306 GTI)

ZEO PROTOTYPE CUP

Race 1 Charles Hall (Chiron CN2)

Race 2 Mike Jenvey (Jenvey-Gunn TS6)

CATERHAM 310R

Races 1 & 2 Lewis Thompson

CATERHAM ROADSPORT

Races 1 & 2 Taylor O'Flanagan

CATERHAM 270R

Race 1 Carl Jones

Race 2 Blair McConachie

CATERHAM ACADEMY

Green Freddie Chiddicks

White Harry George

CROFT

MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY

Race 1 Joe Wiggin

Race 2 Nicky Taylor

CNC HEADS SPORTS AND SALOONS

Race 1 Jon Woolfitt (Spire GT-R)

Race 2 Paul Rose (Saker RAPX)

LEGENDS

Races 1 & 5 Jack Parker

Races 2 & 3 Miles Rudman

Race 4 John Mickel

Race 6 Will Gibson

CATERHAM SIGMAX/SIGMA 150

Race 1 Harry Senior (SigMax, below)

Race 2 Ben Winrow (SigMax)

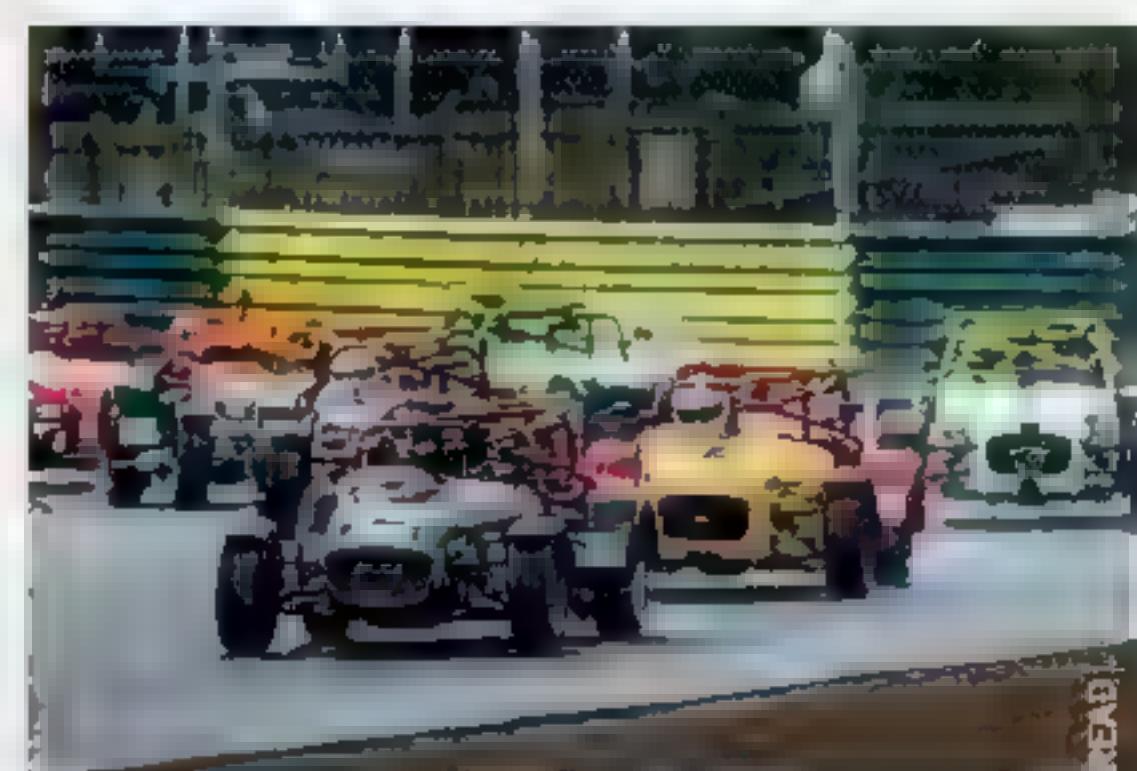
CATERHAM SIGMA 135

Race 1 James McCall

Race 2 David Read

C1 RACING SERIES

Team Davies (John Davies/Matthew Davies)



For full results visit: tsi-timing.com

THE ULTIMATE FORMULA 1-EQUIVALENT TRACKDAY WEAPON

The Cosworth V8-powered Rodin FZED offers full-on driving fulfilment – an F1-style experience in a more user-friendly package

TOM HOWARD

Many people dream of driving a Formula 1 car, but few are lucky enough to experience the thrill of getting behind the wheel of motorsport's fastest thoroughbreds.

You can, of course, if you have sufficiently significant disposal income, buy a vintage F1 car for use on trackdays or in historic racing events, but there is now another way to achieve the closest experience to the pinnacle of the sport that money can buy.

Step forward a little-known New Zealand company called Rodin Cars, responsible for producing the ultimate trackday weapon. The car may be familiar to many as the Lotus T125, but four years of development and refinement, assisted by W Series champion Jamie Chadwick, have created the Rodin FZED. The company's tagline is 'nothing like it', and it's fair to say that is pretty accurate.

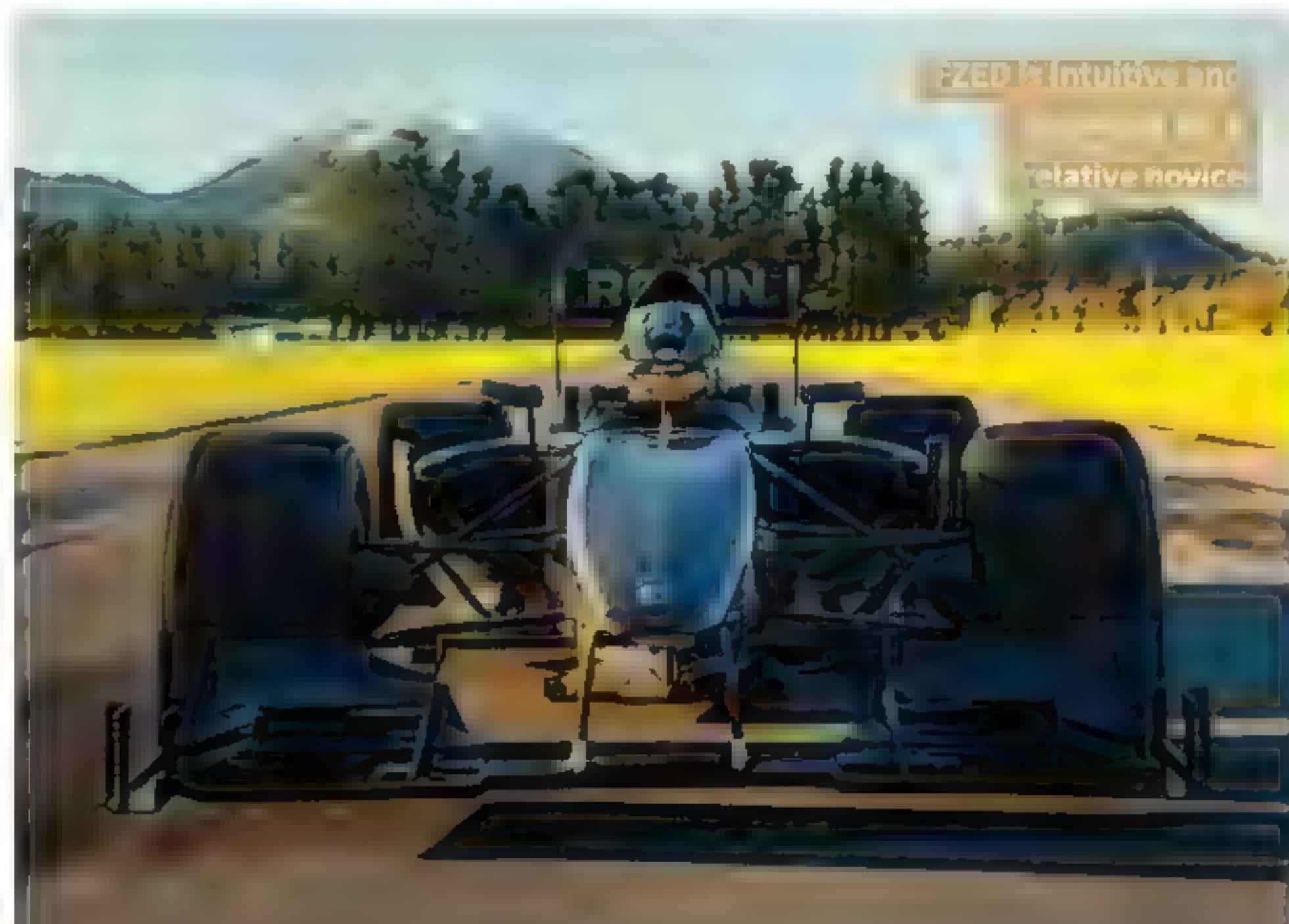
It all began when Australian businessman David Dicker bought five Lotus T125 chassis, having seen potential in the failed project in 2016. Based near Christchurch, New Zealand, his team set about developing the car, replacing a myriad of components with titanium 3D-printed bespoke parts, from screws to the steering wheel, which has resulted in shaving 40kg from its original 650kg weight. It was already lighter than a contemporary F1 car... The chassis is bolted to a 3.8-litre Cosworth V8 that produces 675bhp and a power-to-weight ratio that will embarrass pretty much any other trackday beast.

In the hands of 19-year-old Kiwi Formula 2 race winner

Liam Lawson, the FZED was close to 1.5 seconds faster than a previous-generation Dallara GP2 car around Rodin's track at its South Island facility.

Red Bull F1 junior Lawson, who has been linked to the project since he was 14 years old, recently shook down the car at Donington Park, the location of Rodin's new European outpost. "This is the closest thing [to driving an F1 car] and I think this is even faster than an F2 car," he says.

But if Lawson's words strike fear into any wannabe drivers,





he has a few calming words too. While the car is not short of grunt and is capable of punchy lap times, the way it drives is intuitive and rewarding for a relative novice.

"When you drive an F2 car, it is such a procedure before you start pushing," he says. "The brake warm-up and tyre warm-up has to be right before you can push – and if you're not at the level it's horrible.

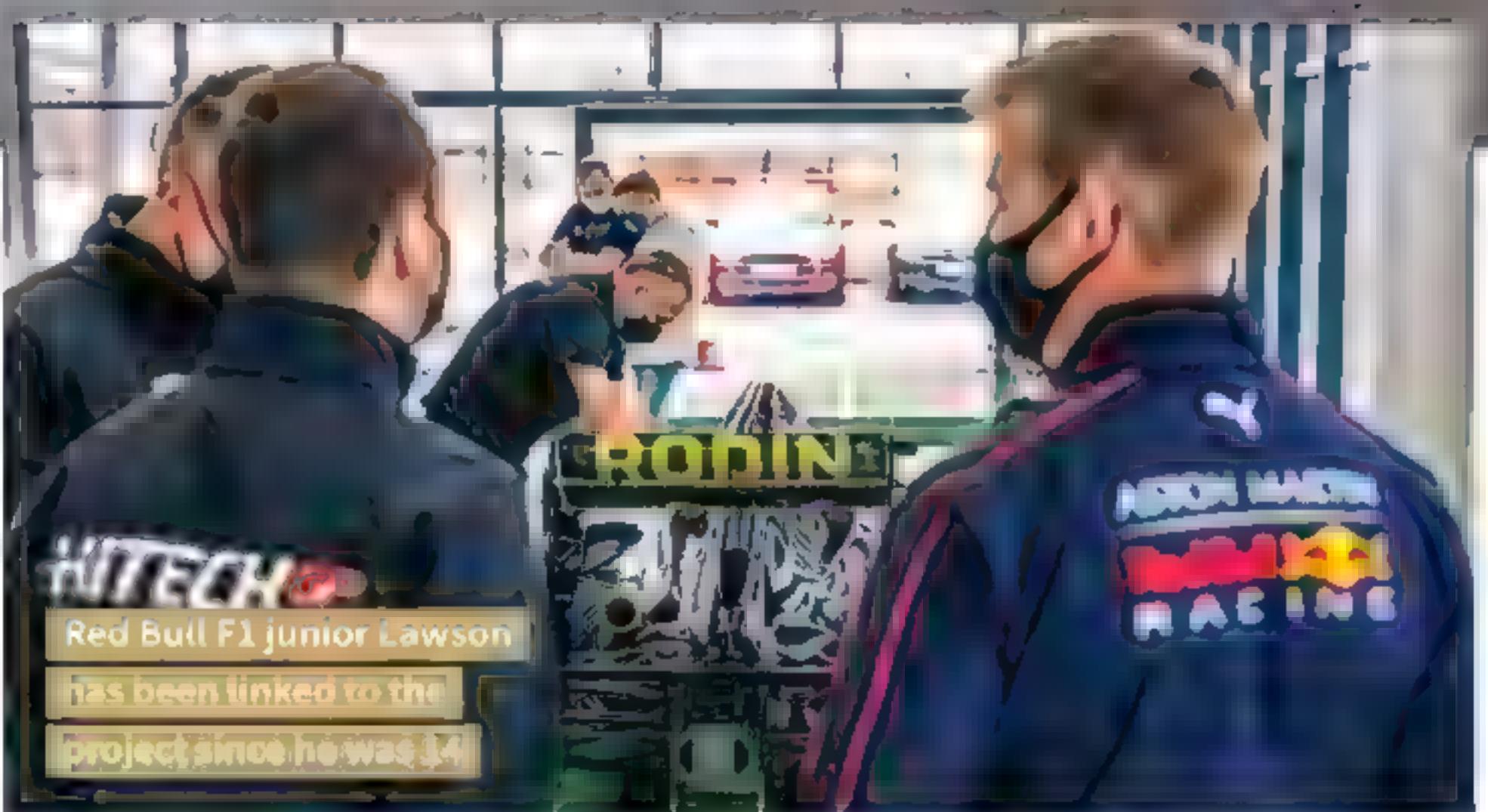
"For this car, I drove out on stone cold tyres but as soon as you get some temperature it is easy to build up to – you don't have to be on it. When you do get to the limit, it is manageable. It's not a difficult car to drive. I think you would probably compare this to a 2010 F1 car with a little bit less power. That's what it feels like and what it looks like."

"A lot of cars that are this fast, you have to build up and quite often when you drive them slowly, they are hard to drive – they don't like it and you need to be on it quite quickly. As soon as you get brake temp in this car, it's easy and you can just cruise around. I was doing a couple of drifts out of one of the corners!"

Of course all this fun and sheer speed comes at a cost. The FZED is aimed at the wealthy, who can splash out £600,000 for a trackday machine, although that is a comparable price to some of the more exotic GT3 race cars. That price tag does not include spares or extras, but it does feature a two-and-a-half-day training course at Rodin's New Zealand facility and test track with driver trainer Mark Williamson.

"Obviously it is an expensive experience, but it's worth it if you can do it because there is no experience like it," reckons

"OBVIOUSLY IT IS EXPENSIVE, BUT IT'S WORTH IT IF YOU CAN DO IT BECAUSE THERE IS NO EXPERIENCE LIKE IT"



Lawson. "You can do hot laps in GT cars, but it's nothing compared to something like this."

Customers won't be able to run the car themselves, but Rodin will organise track hire. The FZED has been re-engineered to be easily run by one to two engineers. Top single-seater squad Hitech Grand Prix will be the engineering post-sales support company for Rodin's customers in the UK and Europe, and customers will be able to access Hitech engineers to service their vehicles and offer any mechanical support they need.

Sadly the FZED cannot be raced as the car is not FIA homologated, although if interest in racing the machines grows, Rodin is keen to investigate the possibility of enabling the FZED to become a competition car. It would be a machine for modern-day Formula Libre. But for now, it will remain as the ultimate F1-equivalent trackday experience. ■



**motorsport
IMAGES**

A QUEST FOR JAGUAR SUCCESS



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When we were putting together Autosport's Jaguar E-type special last month, one of the newest publications we turned

to was Phillip Bingham's *The All-American Hero and Jaguar's Racing E-types*. The 288-page book has two main threads: the efforts by Briggs Cunningham to win the Le Mans 24 Hours; and the early competition career of the E-type, in which the American team boss was involved.

Both stories are well-known, particularly by those who have read Richard Harman's (much bigger and more expensive) *Cunningham: The Passion, The Cars, The Legacy*, but it's still a welcome addition to Autosport's shelves.

Cunningham's life and efforts to win Le Mans with an American-built machine, which peaked in 1953 when the Cunningham C-5R of Phil Walters and John Fitch prevented a Jaguar C-type 1-2-3 in third, sets the scene. By the mid-1950s, running other cars was becoming more appealing to Cunningham, and Jaguar was an obvious possible partner.

Cunningham became Jaguar's North American distributor and ran the D-type that Mike Hawthorn and Walters took to victory in the 1955 Sebring 12 Hours, a rare success for the legendary car away from the smooth, high-speed sweeps of Le Mans. Part of the

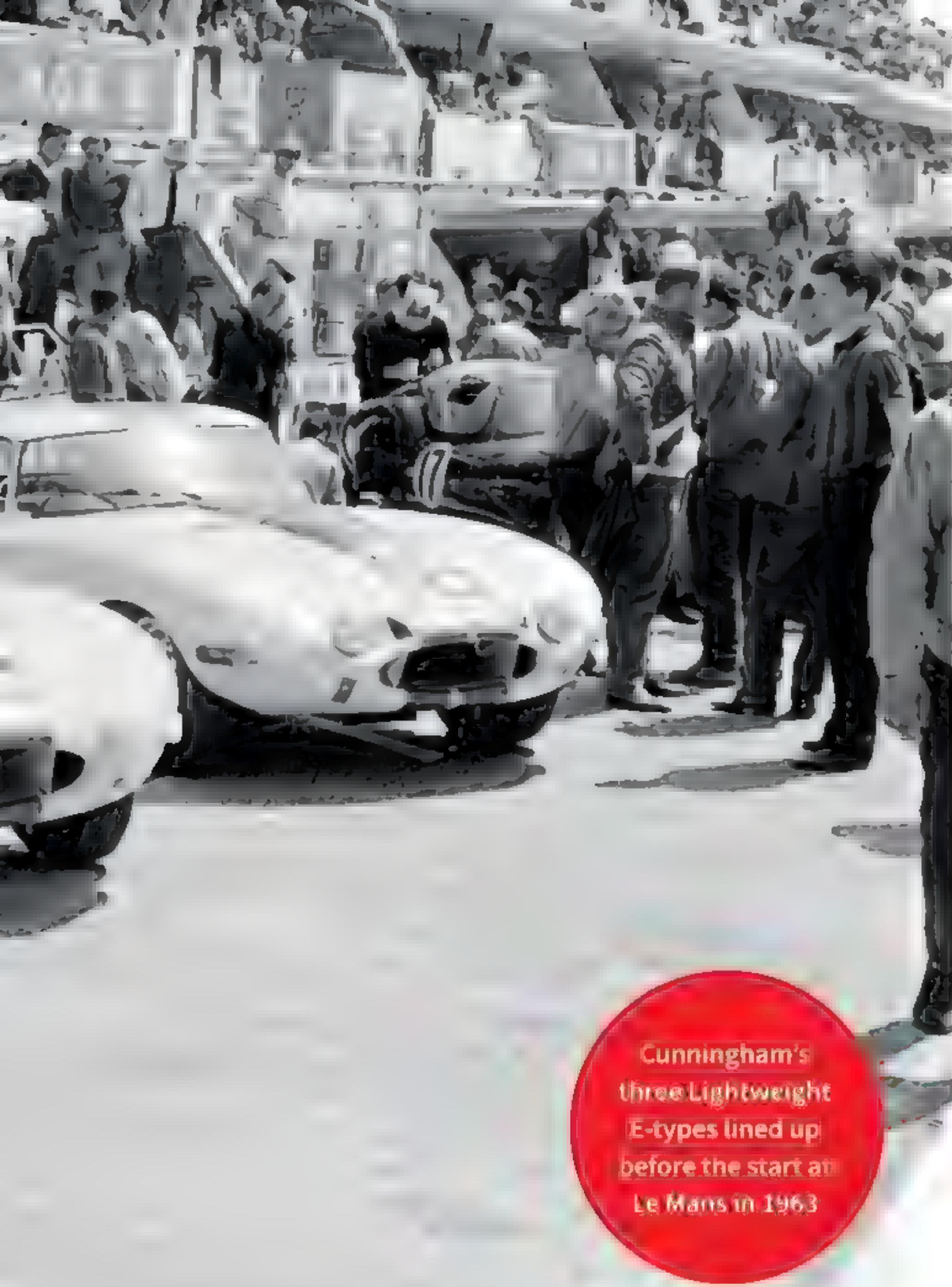
deal meant abandoning constructing his own cars, an endeavour that was becoming expensive in any case.

After running Lister-Jaguars, Cunningham approached Jaguar about racing and developing the E2A, essentially the 'missing link' between the D-type sports-racer and the GT E-type. The back-door support received from Jaguar would be repeated when the E-type itself went racing, culminating in the series of Lightweights for 1963.

The tale of the E-type in competition – beyond just the races with Cunningham – forms the second half of the book. The car's initial promise, both in Europe against Ferrari and in the US beating the Chevrolet Corvettes, leads into the one-sided battle against the 250 GTO and the rise of the Shelby Cobras. This includes some technical drawings made by Jaguar after it got hold of a GTO to compare with the E-type.

Those familiar with Porter Press's *Exceptional Cars* and *Great Cars* series will recognise much of the format. This includes brief sections on some of the key individuals and circuits in the wider story, particularly the drivers, and helps Bingham cover a lot of ground quickly. Aside from big names Dan Gurney and Bruce McLaren, there are small profiles on three drivers probably underrated in European circles and who Cunningham rated as his three best regulars: Walters (who quit after the 1955 Le Mans tragedy despite being on the verge of a Ferrari drive), Fitch and Walt Hansgen.

E-type development was pushed forward by privateers, including Cunningham's Alfred Momo, but it was not enough. By the end of 1963 the competition was moving out of reach – and Cunningham closed his team at the end of the season, though his last race as a



driver didn't come until the 1966 Sebring 12 Hours.

Two of the most rewarding 'extra' elements come in the late stages of the book. The first is the remarkable story of the 'missing Lightweight', chassis S850660, which returned to competition in historic events after being in a Los Angeles lock-up garage for many years. And the other is a section of stunning photos of chassis 875027, the roadster that Cunningham's team developed from near standard to what might today be described as Semi-Lightweight form.

Cunningham never did win Le Mans and the E-type didn't topple Ferrari on track, though Briggs himself and Roy Salvadori did give the famous GT its best finish at the 24 Hours with fourth in 1962. A rather different partnership – Carroll Shelby and Ford – would be required to achieve both. But the Cunningham story is still something far from a failure, and the E-type's status as an icon is assured 60 years after it first appeared. Combining the two makes this an entertaining and readable book.

KEVIN TURNER

FINISHING STRAIGHT



As Formula 1 takes a summer break, we take stock of the season so far and rate the grid. Ariana Bravo is joined by Alex Kalinaukas (Grand Prix editor, Autosport) and Stuart Codling (executive editor, GP Racing) to discuss.

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Formula E

Rounds 14 & 15/15

Tempelhof, Germany

14-15 August

TV Live Eurosport 2,

Sat 1230, Quest, Sat

1300, BBC 2, Sun 1400,

Eurosport 2, Sun 1400.

Available via BBC Red Button, iPlayer and BBC Sport website

Ypres Rally

World Rally Championship

Round 8/12

Ypres, Belgium

13-15 August

TV Live BT Sport ESPN, Sat 0900, BT Sport 3, Sat 1400, BT Sport 1, Sun 0800, Sun 1100

TV Highlights BT Sport

3, Fri 2330, BT Sport 1,

Sat 1030, BT Sport 1,

Mon 0000, Red Bull TV,

Fri 2100, Sat 2100, Sun

2100, ITV4, Wed 2300

IndyCar Series

Round 12/16

Indianapolis, USA

14 August

TV Live Sky Sports F1,

Sat 1730

NASCAR Cup Series

Round 24/36

Indianapolis, USA

15 August

TV Live Premier Sports

2, Sun 1730

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 21/33

Indianapolis, USA

14 August

MotoGP

Round 11/18

Red Bull Ring, Austria

15 August

TV Live BT Sport 2,

Sun 1230

TV Highlights BT Sport

3, Sun 1900, ITV4 Sun

2300

UK MOTORSPORT Knockhill BARC

14-15 August

British F4, BTCC, Ginetta

GT4 Supercup, Ginetta

Junior, Mini Challenge,

Porsche Carrera Cup

TV Live ITV4, Sun 1115

Oulton Park BRSCC

14 August

CityCar Cup, Fun Cup,

Modified Fords

Snetterton CSCC

14-15 August

Classic K, Future

Classics, Magnificent

Sevens, Modern Classics,

New Millennium, Open

Series, Slicks Series, Swinging 60s, Tin Tops, Turbo Tin Tops

Silverstone MSVR

14-15 August

7 Race Series, GB3, GT

Cup, Monoposto, MSVT

Supercup, Porsche

Club/911 Challenge,

Radical Challenge/

SR1 Cup

Mondello Park MPSC

14-15 August

Fiesta STs, Fiesta Zetecs,

Formula BOSS, Formula

Sheane, Formula

Vee, Ginetta Junior,

Historics, HRCA Pre-55,

Irish Legends, Irish

Supercars/ITCC/SEAT

Supercup, Strykers

Brands Hatch MSVR

15 August

Alfa Romeo, Classic

Alfa Challenge, Ferrari

Classic, Ferrari Racing

British Rally Championship

Grampian Forest Rally

Banchory

14 August

British Hillclimb Championship

Shelsley Walsh

14-15 August



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Lewis Hamilton (McLaren-Mercedes MP4-22) gets ahead of – and narrowly avoids getting taken out by – team-mate Fernando Alonso at the start of the 2007 Spanish Grand Prix at

Barcelona. Alonso had qualified second behind Felipe Massa (Ferrari F2007), and his attempt to go around the outside of the Brazilian at Turn 1 went pear-shaped as he ran off-track. Fourth-place qualifier Hamilton had

already gained a position slicing past Kimi Raikkonen's Ferrari, so Alonso's over-ambition let him through to take off in pursuit of eventual race winner Massa. Hamilton finished runner-up, with Alonso completing the podium.

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TEAM PRINCIPLE
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Welcome to the start of a new Le Mans era

Hypercars are finally here. LMP1 machines provided a fine spectacle, were technologically advanced and incredibly fast. But they were also expensive and it became clear long ago that something new was needed.

After much back and forth, Hypercars – which will come in LMH and, from next year, LMDh forms – is the answer. As Gary Watkins shows on page 16 of our 2021 Le Mans guide, a different ethos underpins the new regulations. The cars will be slower and (crucially) cheaper, which is why Ferrari, Porsche, Audi, Peugeot, BMW and Acura could be battling it out at the top of sportscar racing within the next two years.

It's a mouthwatering prospect, particularly as the Le Mans 24 Hours heads towards its centenary in 2023, but we're not there yet. For now, we have Toyota heading to the French classic as the favourite once again, to see if it can make it four Le Mans wins on the bounce. It's not a done deal, though. The GR010 is

a new car – gremlins could creep in – and, as Jim Glickenhaus tells us on p4, his challenger wouldn't be on the grid if he didn't feel it had a chance of success.

LMP2 could be the hardest-fought class this year, and we talk to the 11 ex-Formula 1 drivers involved in the battle (p18), while James Newbold also hears from the HubAuto Porsche team that is taking on the factory squads in GTE Pro (p26).

The big names might not be back in the top class just yet, but Le Mans always provides fascinating storylines throughout the field. Here's our guide to help you follow them in the 89th edition.



KEVIN TURNER
EDITOR

FOLLOW THE EVENT WITH AUTOSPORT

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Le Mans 2021



COVER IMAGES

JEP/Motorsport Images

BATTLE AT THE TOP

CAN GLICKENHAUS CHALLENGE TOYOTA?

The rise of a new marque and why it believes there's a chance against the big manufacturers

12

BREAKING A CURSE

TOYOTA'S 'SECOND' CREW

They always get the bad luck but Lopez, Conway and Kobayashi are hoping for change

16

HYPERCAR VS LMP1

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT NEW RULES

How the new top class compares to the outgoing machines of the LMP1 era

18

F1 DRIVERS IN LMP2

GP DRIVERS ON THE TOUGHEST CLASS

We speak to the 11 ex-Formula 1 drivers contesting the competitive LMP2 category

26

TAKING ON THE BIG GUNS

THE ASIAN PRIVATEER IN GTE PRO

It's a young squad, but HubAuto is ready to fight the factory teams in the top GT class

31

TEAM BY TEAM

SPOTLIGHT ON ALL THE ENTRIES

Your guide to the cars and drivers that will tackle the 89th Le Mans 24 Hours

42

1971 RETRO

THE GREAT TEAM THAT WAS DENIED

JW Automotive Engineering and the Porsche 917 should have been a perfect combo...

46

MAP AND INFO

STATS AND CURRENT POINTS

Circuit map, how to follow the race and championship tables

48

ARCHIVE

DRAMA IN 1966

Le Mans is a tough race, especially when rain hits, as the 1966 edition proved

50

ENTRY LIST AND TIMETABLE

ALL THE CARS AND DRIVERS

Car number, driver, team and class information for every 2021 entry

LE MANS GUIDE



HYPERCAR

Upholding the Le Mans spirit of independents

Glickenhaus will arrive at Le Mans with an all-new LMH racer, powered by an engine built by a rally specialist. But can it challenge the might of Toyota?

GARY WATKINS

PHOTO: GARY G. WATKINS / MOTOSPORT IMAGES



Jim Glickenhaus doesn't mind being called a privateer. In fact, he revels in that description and his underdog status. Yes, the American is a car manufacturer, or at least is well on the way to becoming a fully fledged one, but he's in the tradition of a line of independents to take on the challenge of the Le Mans 24 Hours. The difference between his organisation and so many of the specialist builders that preceded him – think de Cadenet, WM and Panoz – is he's pitching up with a genuine chance of victory. That's what he thinks, and that's what the new Le Mans Hypercar regulations were conceived to allow.

Glickenhaus Racing will be on the grid with a pair of new LMHs for the 89th running of the great race courtesy of those rules. They have facilitated the ambition of this retired film director with a handful of cult classics behind him to go to Le Mans with a car bearing his name, and to do it with much more than just a faint hope of winning. But for LMH, there would be no Glickenhaus-Pipo 007 LMHs competing at the Circuit de la Sarthe this month.

The new rules, devised to slash costs and level the playing field between the big and the little guys, opened the door to Glickenhaus, and then held it ajar for him to have a shot at overall victory. "That's



what I'm doing this for: to try to win Le Mans," he says. "Why would I build a car and not believe I'm going there to win? But I wouldn't be here if it was still LMP1. We couldn't afford it, and if we could, we wouldn't have a chance against the factories anyway."

There's another reason why Glickenhaus is participating at the very pinnacle of sportscar racing after a decade taking on the challenge of the Nürburgring 24 Hours with cars of his own construction. And he can thank LMH for this one, too.

"These rules allowed me to build something that looks like the cars I remember racing at Le Mans in the 1960s and 1970s," he says. "A car that looks good."

A desire to build something good-looking is where the



Glickenhaus racing story begins. Back in 2005 he commissioned Italian styling house Pininfarina to produce what he calls a "homage" to the majestic Ferrari 330 P3/4 that won the 1967 Daytona 24 Hours with Chris Amon and Lorenzo Bandini and now sits in his collection in Sleepy Hollow, New York. This reimagination of a classic was based on a Ferrari Enzo chassis, as well as its powertrain, and became known as the Ferrari P4/5 by Pininfarina after the Italian manufacturer gave the car full blessing. When it was unveiled at the 2006 Pebble Beach concours in California, the obvious question was what to do next. The answer was obvious for a man who also owns an ex-Penske Lola-Chevrolet MkII Can-Am – to go racing with the thing.

The Le Mans ambition was already in the back of Glickenhaus's mind. He admits that he approached race organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest about whether he could use the P4/5 as the basis of some kind of GT contender for the 24 Hours. It was quietly pointed out to him that there wasn't a place in the 24 Hours for one-off specials, so he took his ideas to the promoter of the Nürburgring enduro. It did, and still does, welcome one-offs in its SPX class.

Five years after the launch of the P4/5, he was on the grid for the Nordschleife classic with the first car to carry the Scuderia Cameron Glickenhaus name. It wasn't the P4/5, but a lookalike thereof. Underneath it wasn't an Enzo, but a 430 Stradale upgraded for racing with components from the GT2 version of the car.



Rule of thumb: Jim Glickenhaus (right) is going to Le Mans to win



“These rules allowed me to build a car that looks like those that raced at Le Mans in the 1960s and '70s”

“I would love to have raced a car with the Enzo’s V12,” he says, “but the reality was that it wasn’t going to work. It was way too inefficient on fuel; those days had passed.”

A car known as the SCG P4/5 Competizione was followed in 2012 by the P4/5 Modificata, a hybrid version of the original. This was an important step on the road to Le Mans because Glickenhaus forged his first links with Podium Advanced Technologies, a then-new company set up by a group of friends who’d studied for their doctorates at Turin University. The company was brought in by N-Technology, which masterminded the P4/5 race project, for its hybrid expertise. The company based in Pont-Saint-Martin an hour north of Turin has gone on to become the centre of Glickenhaus technical operations. “I stayed with them because

they’re the brightest of young guys,” he says. “They understood hybrids, but they also understood racing and the road stuff. Podium was able to do everything for us.”

Podium was responsible for the first bespoke Glickenhaus, or rather SCG: the 003C that came on stream for the marque’s Nurburgring campaign in 2015. Two years later, it claimed pole position for the 24 Hours. By the time the next racer – the Glickenhaus (not SCG) 004 that also forms the basis of the marque’s first bona fide road car – arrived at the Nurburgring in 2020, the marque was already working on plans to step up to sportscar racing’s big time.

Glickenhaus announced its intention to build an LMH in November 2018, a month ahead of the publication of the

regulations. It beat Toyota to the punch in that respect, though Podium technical director Luca Ciancetti insists that the programme didn’t get going in earnest until much later the following year.

“Jim and I had been working on the idea in the months before,” says Ciancetti, “but once we got the first draft of the regulations we understood that they were pitched at the right level for us. The philosophy allows a privateer to do a car at a reasonable budget and try to fight with the bigger manufacturer teams.”

Podium, as a young company, brought in what Ciancetti calls “people from Formula 1” to bolster its team for the LMH programme. Among their number is ▶



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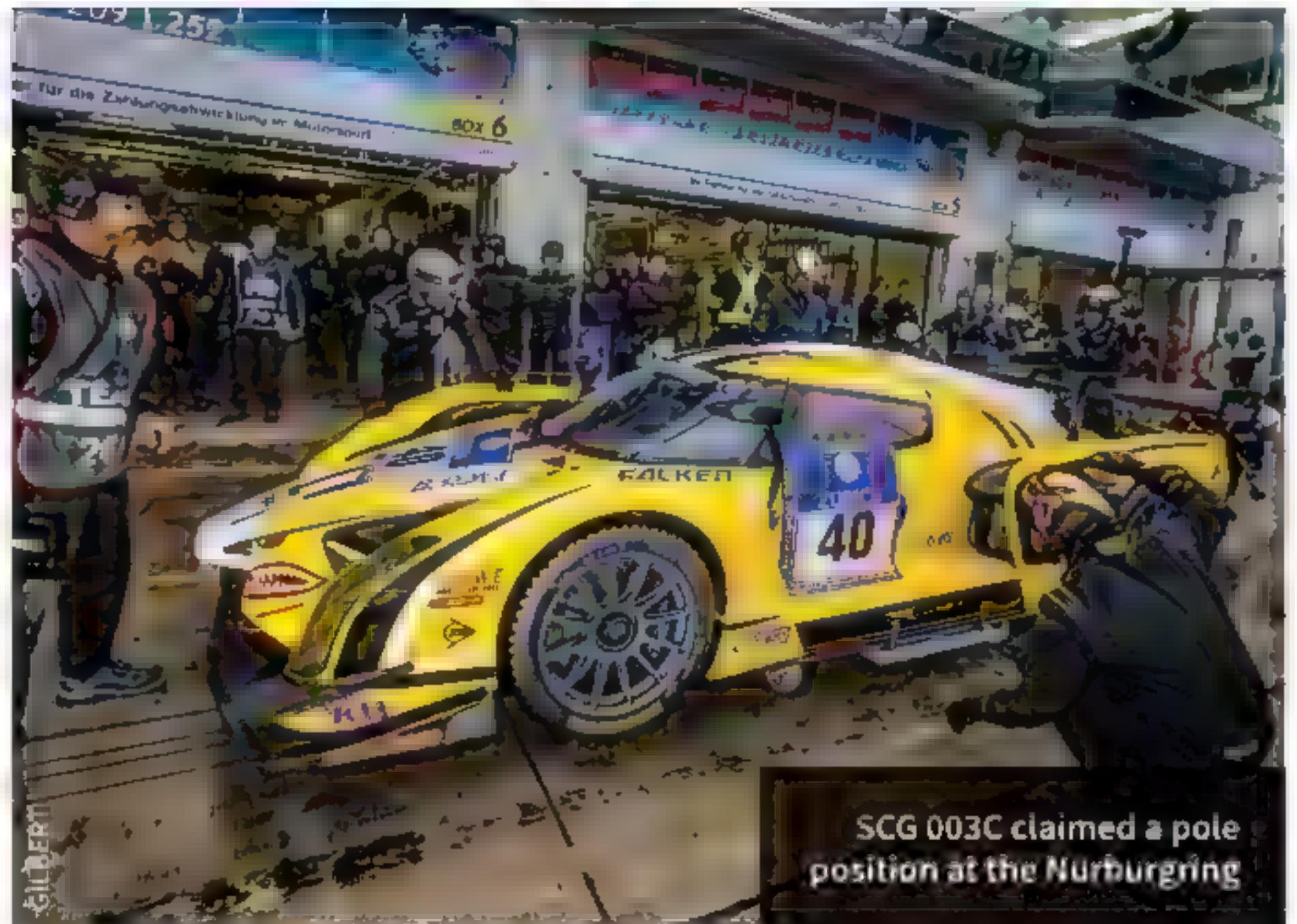
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ex-Toro Rosso chief designer Mark Tatham, who has worked as a consultant on the 007.

Podium was also responsible for Pipo Moteurs, another unfashionable choice of partner given its lack of Le Mans track record, being chosen to produce the 007's engine. Ciancetti asked the Lyon-based company with a proven pedigree in both rallying and rallycross to put forward a proposal for the engine concept.

Pipo managing director Frederic Barozier, whose organisation developed the engines that took three World Rally Championship manufacturers' titles with Peugeot and two with Ford, was coincidentally already evaluating the LMH concept. "I was looking at the regulations, but wondering who I could sell an engine to because big manufacturers want to promote their own technology," he says. "Then Luca approached me in December 2019."

Barozier makes no secret that the 3.5-litre twin-turbo V8 his organisation designed for the Glickenhaus builds on Pipo's experience with four-cylinder turbo engines in the off-road



"I'm in this for the long haul. I wasn't going to race the car until it was ready and it was reliable"

disciplines. "The cylinder head is based on the rallycross engine," he explains. "The bore is close to the rallycross engine, but the stroke closer to the WRC motor. Because we were developing an endurance engine with a lower turbo, we increased the capacity from 3.2 litres [two times the 1.6 litres of a WRC engine]."

Not all the choices of partners by Glickenhaus have been quite so left field. It has brought in Joest Racing to bolster its Podium-based racing operations. The winner of 16 Le Mans, if you include the 2003 victory when its crew ran the winning Bentley, had no programme after the end of its relationship with Mazda in the IMSA SportsCar Championship in North America was brought to an early conclusion at the beginning of 2020.

"Running two cars was always going to be a bit stressful in terms of the resources we have at Podium," says Glickenhaus. "Joest have the people, they have the equipment and they have the experience. Why wouldn't we have gone with them?"

The Glickenhaus 007 ran for the first time in February, which explains why the team never intended to race in the originally scheduled 2021 WEC opener the following month at Sebring, the

1000-mile fixture on the undercard of IMSA's 12 Hours. The team also scratched from what, after Sebring's cancellation, became the first race of the season at Spa.

Glickenhaus points out that once an LMH is homologated ahead of its race debut, its specification is effectively fixed for five seasons. Development is limited to five so-called tokens that need to be applied for to the organisers. "I'm in this for the long haul," he says. "We were always playing catch-up; there were delays in our programme caused by COVID and Brexit among other things. I wasn't gonna race the car until it was ready, until I knew it was reliable."

The team believed that was the case after a 30-hour test at Motorland Aragon in Spain at the end of April. With that hurdle cleared, it fielded a solo 007 in round two of this year's WEC at the Portimao 8 Hours in June. That was followed by a full two-car entry at Monza in July, the final race before Le Mans.

There were flashes of promise on the car's debut in the Algarve, a circuit that the team insisted would not suit its contender. Yet the new car might have won at Monza. The #709 entry shared by Romain Dumas, Richard Westbrook and Franck Mailleux briefly led and ended up finishing fourth.

Dumas took the lead when the Toyota that eventually won suffered an electronic glitch. The Frenchman was on an in-lap at the time and, when he stopped, the team opted to change the front brakes. But for that, the team would have finished at the very least in second position. ▶



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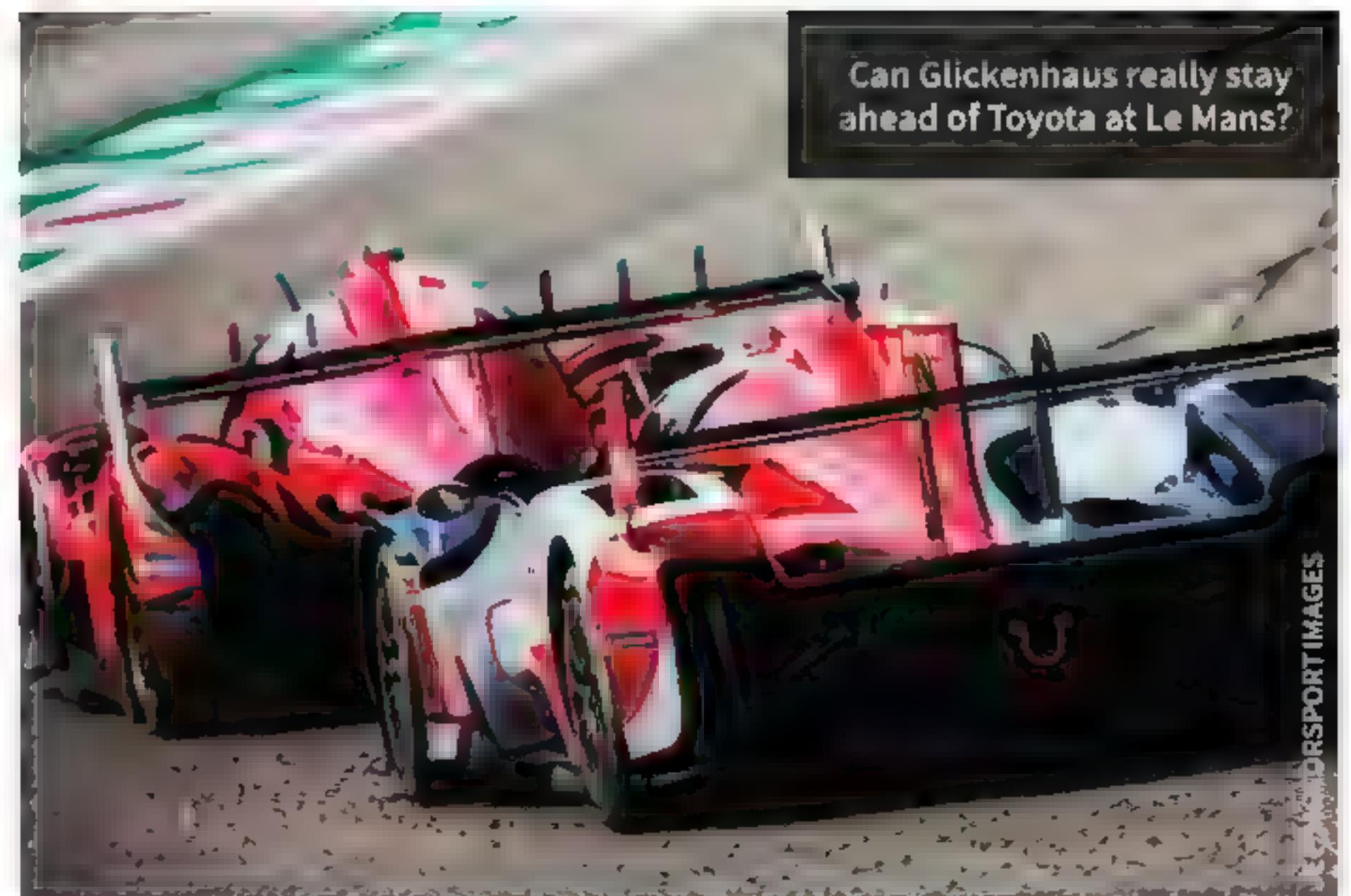
"Now no one can say Glickenhaus is a joke," said Ciancetti after the race. "It was a great race for us. We have some issues to sort, but you cannot say we are lost." Glickenhaus put it slightly differently: "Some people were saying we were going to be worse than..." It would probably be uncharitable to name the team he went on to mention.

There is a confidence in the camp that the team has a fundamentally reliable race car. Ryan Briscoe overrevved the Pipo engine when he burnt out the clutch in Portugal, but it managed to complete another six hours after a change of the transmission part. "That engine is one tough bitch," says Glickenhaus.

The team remains hopeful that it doesn't have an inherent braking problem. It identified an assembly issue with the brake ducts that limited the flow of cooling air at Monza, which it was still investigating in the lead-up to the test day on the full Circuit de la Sarthe that kicks off Le Mans week this Sunday. The engine and gearbox problems on the sister car that Pipo Derani had qualified fourth at Monza, less than eight tenths off the pace, have been traced to a faulty wiring loom.

"I don't see us having any issues that are going to cause any problems moving forward into Le Mans," says Glickenhaus. "Of course we have had our problems, but so has Toyota. These are new cars. You have problems and then you overcome them. That's racing."

Glickenhaus believes that the 007 will move closer to the pace at Le Mans with its two cars and a reshuffled driver line-up that features Dumas, Westbrook and Briscoe in one car and Derani,



Mailleux and Olivier Pla in the other.

"We took a step forward from Portimao to Monza and according to the billion numbers we've crunched we're gonna do it again at Le Mans," he says. "We know that we are faster on vmax [maximum velocity] than Toyota. That's by design, because we wanna be quick at Le Mans."

"We're gonna try to win this year and we're gonna keep on trying when Peugeot arrive next year, and then when Ferrari and everyone else comes along in 2023." 



Alpine's new challenge with 'old' machinery

An emotive name is back at the sharp end of the Le Mans 24 Hours grid this year. Renault's Alpine marque has moved up from LMP2 with the French Signatech squad to the forefront of sportscar racing more than 40 years after claiming victory at the French enduro with Didier Pironi and Jean-Pierre Jaussaud aboard the bubble-cockpit A442B. The 1978 triumph at Le Mans was the culmination of a big-budget assault that had started three years before. Its attempt to repeat that victory is much more low-key.

Alpine has returned with what is, for now, a one-off campaign with an old non-hybrid privateer LMP1 car: the Gibson-powered ORECA design that raced in the previous two editions of the WEC as the Rebellion R-13. The car, now known as the Alpine A480, has been 'grandfathered' to race alongside the new breed of Le Mans Hypercars, which means it has been slowed with a decrease in engine

power and an increase in weight. And therein lies the big chance for the car. An already-proven machine will be going slower than in the past, even if the additional weight could take a toll. Reliability should be the strong suit of a car matched against the brand-new LMH contenders from Toyota and Glickenhaus.

The task for Alpine, reckons Nicolas Lapierre, who shares the Alpine with Matthieu Vaxiviere and Andre Negrao, is to keep pre-race favourite Toyota honest. "We are confident we are going to be reliable, though a question mark is the extra weight, so we should have a shot," says the Frenchman, who has returned to the Alpine fold for this season after a year away from the marque with which he won the P2 WEC title in 2016 and 2018-19. "We are going to be a little bit behind them in terms of pace, but hopefully we can keep contact and be there if the other cars have problems. That's our chance."

There's a second question mark heading into Le Mans. The A480 was unable to match the stint length of the LMH machinery on the way to podium finishes in each of the first three 2021 WEC rounds because it couldn't accommodate the full amount of energy or fuel allocated to it under the Balance of Performance, since it was hastily conceived around an LMP2 monocoque at the back end of 2017. Its 75-litre capacity compares with the 90 litres of the Toyota. The initial BoP for Le Mans has now reduced the amount of fuel afforded to the car, which means it can't match the stints from Toyota and Glickenhaus.

The energy allocations in LMH are based on cars doing 12 laps around the 8.47-mile track. The Alpine won't achieve more than 11. That means it is likely to make two or three extra stops. "The fuel range is a big thing," Lapierre says. "It makes us feel we are going into the race with one arm tied behind our backs."



HYPERCAR

Can the 'second' Toyota break its Le Mans curse?

One Toyota, normally with the number 7 on the side, always seems to attract the bad luck in the 24 Hours. We spoke to the victims hoping for a change in fortune

GARY WATKINS

Is the bad luck of the #7 Toyota finally going to turn this year? Surely it has to some time: the Circuit de la Sarthe must owe you one.

Mike Conway I never feel like that event owes anyone – it's one of those races. You just keep going and do your best. When we've been the people to beat at Le Mans, we've always felt good about our performance even if the result wasn't what we were looking for. If we win because of luck, it will still be a win and I'm sure it will feel good.

Jose Maria Lopez As a racing driver, you're never wishing for other cars to have problems. But if it happens, it's the way it is. It will be a big race to win.

Are you changing the way you approach the race after the near-misses of the past?

MC We've always gone in with the same mentality. We always

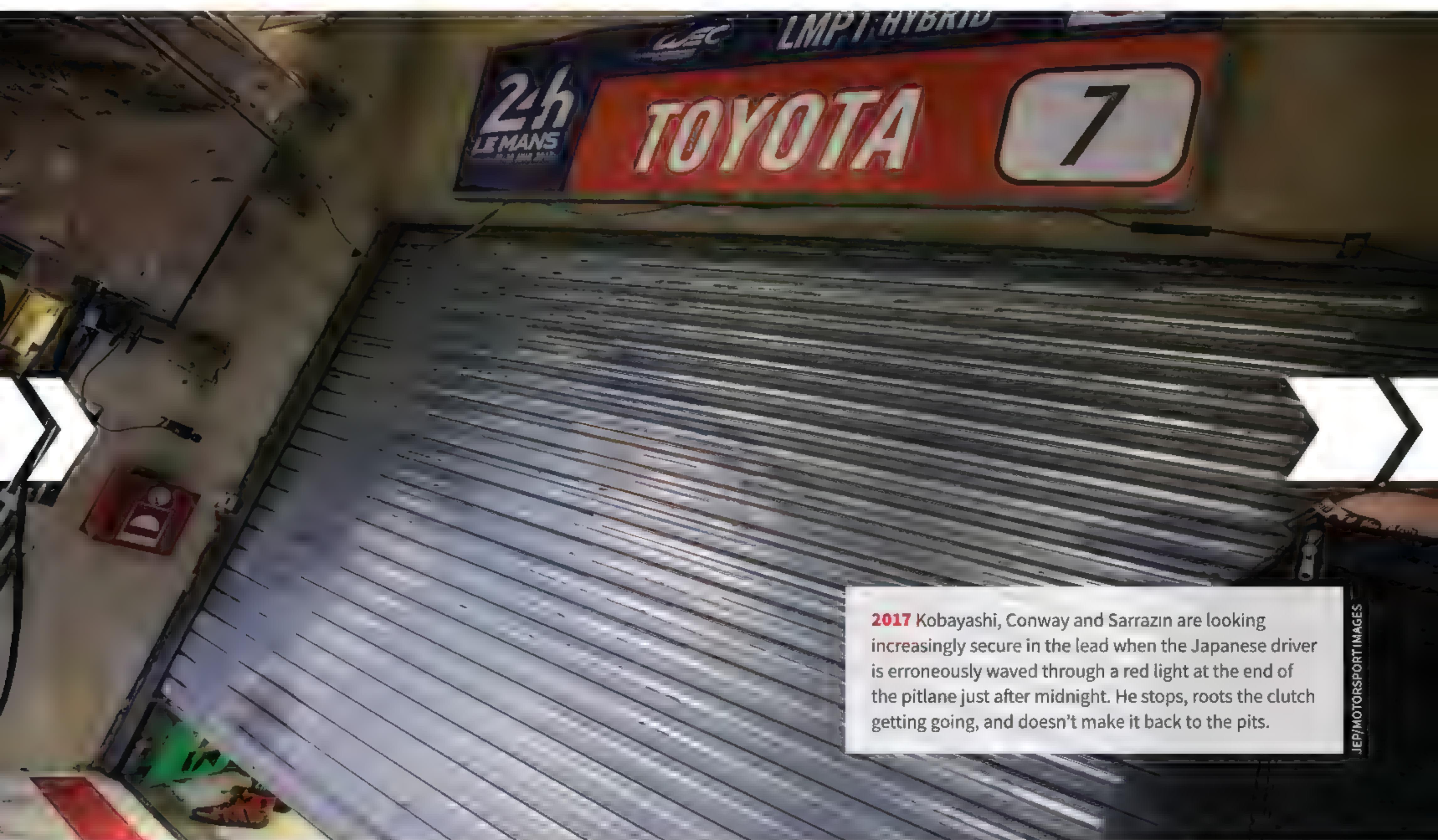
prepare as much as we can without, you might say, trying too hard. Nothing has changed for this year.

Kamui Kobayashi Except for the colour of my hair. I've got a bit more blond now.

JML You can't say that what has happened in the years before was due to lack of preparation. We never leave any stone unturned. The only thing that is different this time is that the race is much more wide open. Over the past few years with the TS050 HYBRID we knew the car and knew we were going to have a good performance. With the new cars, our GR010 HYBRID and the Glickenhaus, it's kind of a white page this time.

So you don't think Le Mans this year is going to be a race between the two Toyotas?

JML No, because the car is so new. We don't have the same level of confidence in the GR010 as we did in the TS050, and then you



2017 Kobayashi, Conway and Sarrazin are looking increasingly secure in the lead when the Japanese driver is erroneously waved through a red light at the end of the pitlane just after midnight. He stops, rots the clutch getting going, and doesn't make it back to the pits.

JEP/MOTORSPORTIMAGES



look at last year's race. Both our cars had problems even though the TS050 was so well-proven.

MC We had the hole in the exhaust, which we weren't expecting.

JML And the other car had the braking problem, but they were a bit lucky because they were able to fix it during a safety car.

MC They had bad luck, but so did we.

Your biggest misfortune, of course, was in 2019. How do you remember the last hour of that year's race?

MC We had such good pace that year.

JML And time to have a problem. We had a slow puncture, so I was able to get back to the pits pretty much at full pace. It wasn't a big deal. As I said, we had time to have a problem. It all started to go wrong, as we all know, after that.

When did you realise, Jose Maria, something was amiss after

the wrong wheel and tyre was replaced?

JML It was quite hard to feel a puncture with the rideheight system we had on the TS050, but as I exited the pits I was watching the sensor and telling the team that it was still showing low pressure. They said wait for a couple of corners while it resets itself. But now the car was behaving like it had a puncture, because after stopping in the pits pressures had dropped. I knew I was going to have to do the full lap at 50 or 60km/h. The feeling was horrible. I knew the victory was gone.

And you cried in the cockpit?

JML Anyone in my place would have cried because we'd put so much effort into it and because of the history between us. The only thing I'm glad for is that one of my team-mates didn't have to experience what I did.

MC We experienced it with you, man. ▶



TRENTZ/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

How Toyota could have given #7 a win

When Jose Maria Lopez left the pits for the second time in two laps, with a shade under an hour of the 2019 Le Mans 24 Hours left on the clock and the chance of victory seemingly gone, the hierarchy on the pitwall at Toyota put their heads together. The #7 TS050 HYBRID the Argentinian shared with Mike Conway and Kamui Kobayashi had been the faster of the team's two cars all race and had lost the win for the strangest of reasons. The question was: should they reverse the positions of the two cars?

The discussion ended up being very brief, recalls Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director Pascal Vasselon. No one disagreed that the drivers of #7 would have been deserving winners but, as the Frenchman says, "racing is not just about the drivers."

"What happened was extremely unfair to the drivers of #7, but it was also clearly related to the crew of #7," he says. "If we had done something it would have



pitstop at which all four wheels were changed.

"Swapping positions was talked about, but the discussion quickly ended simply because the race is about the whole crew of each car," explains Vasselon. "You know what we say: you win together and you lose together."

Vasselon points out that the decision was in line with Toyota's long-standing approach to team orders. "We never decide who is going to

win," he explains. "We do not do what Ferrari has done in Formula 1 and ask a faster driver to move over. Our team orders are about letting a faster car move ahead."

You might see that during Le Mans this year. Toyota has what might be called an 'after you, Claude' policy when it comes to overtaking. If one of its cars is faster and comes up behind the other, the driver in front has to cede position. Expect to see that at Le Mans again this year if the two GR010 HYBRIDs are running in close proximity.

been extremely unfair to the crew of #8, because they did not make a mistake and the crew of #7 did."

The mistake of the #7 squad was to incorrectly wire the tyre-pressure warning system. The car had a punctured left-rear Michelin, but the system was showing it was the right-front. With a set of brand-new tyres having gone on the car when Lopez took over 13 laps earlier, it was decided to change just the 'offending' tyre. That necessitated another slow lap from Lopez and another



2020 The outcome of another Le Mans dominated by Toyota swings on time spent in the pits. The winning #8 TS050 of Buemi, Nakajima and Hartley loses 10 minutes to a braking problem in hour seven, but a holed exhaust on #7 costs half an hour just after halfway.

JML The most annoying thing is that we had fresh tyres for the last couple of hours when I got back in the car, so the risk of a puncture should have been much less. We had such good pace in the night. I remember running an extra stint on the tyres so we could have a fresh set for the end.

MC Yeah, we were doing quadruples and you put in a quintuple.

Mike and Kamui, victory would have been there for the taking in 2017 for you when you were teamed with Stephane Sarrazin, but for the clutch issue after nine hours. What do you remember about the bizarre incident when you were waved out of the pits by the LMP2 driver Vincent Capillaire?

KK It was a very confusing situation. It was dark and you can't see so much from inside the car. I saw this guy in an orange suit waving me out. I was sitting there for maybe 10s and he was still waving. I said to my engineer that I had to go; I was thinking the signal had broken. Then he told me to stop to let the safety car go past. I was telling the team that there was a problem with the clutch after I restarted, but we didn't have a monitoring system and the team told me to do one more lap. If we'd come in straight away we could still have won because everyone else had problems. Changing the clutch is like 40 minutes. It was a big mess.

MC That's the way Le Mans is.

Missing out on the victory that year followed the high of your record-breaking pole position lap, Kamui. Do you see that as one of your career highlights?

KK In terms of YouTube hits, yes!

MC And you still haven't got the cheque through for all those views!

Was it the near-perfect lap?

KK Actually not.

JML I'm sure you missed the apex at the first chicane on the Mulsanne Straight.

KK You're right, but it was my first lap of the day and I had to prepare and jump into the car very quickly. I was sitting around having a cup of coffee when our engineer told me I had to get ready. When I look at the onboard now, I realise that I could have gone much quicker.

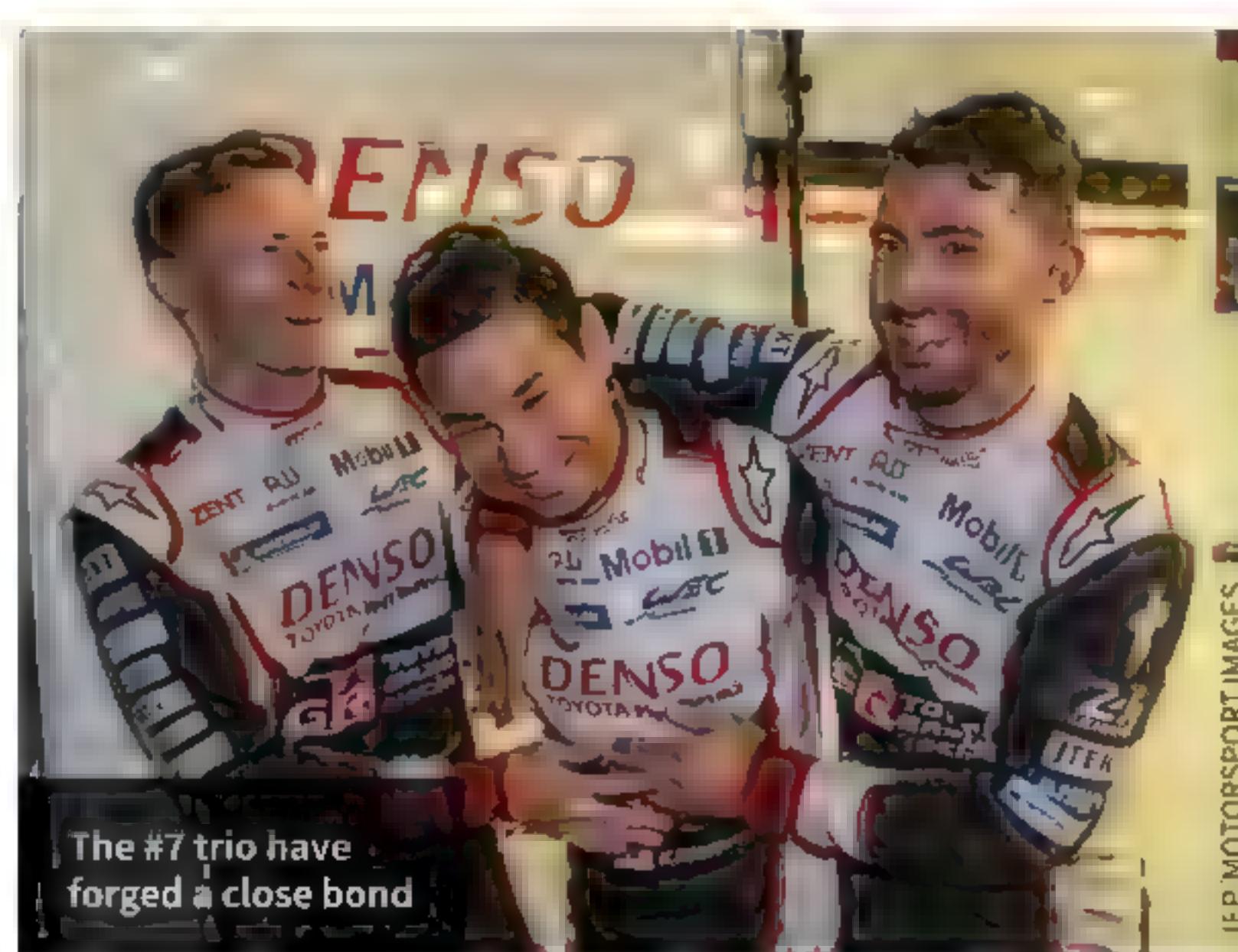
JML So you're disappointed with that lap?

KK Yeah. I went into the first chicane a bit deep, I turned into Arnage a bit late and for the Porsche Curves I braked a bit. I didn't need to, so I messed up. I shouldn't have braked. I didn't need to, but I'd just jumped into the car and I wasn't on the limit.

This year, do you feel you have had an advantage over Sebastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima and Brendon Hartley in the sister car in the World Endurance Championship?

JML We definitely had an edge at Spa; at one point we had a gap of nearly 50 seconds. At Algarve, it was very close. And it should be that way. They are very good drivers as well, so it's always going to be the little things and a little luck that make the difference.

MC And that's even more true at Le Mans. 



The #7 trio have forged a close bond

Hypercars vs LMP1

The first Le Mans 24 Hours run to the Hypercar rules is laden with expectation – so what are the fundamental differences between the WEC's new machines and their predecessors?

GARY WATKINS

Le Mans Hypercar rules introduced for the 2021 World Endurance Championship have torn up motor racing tradition. They are a bold initiative, a new way forward.

The regulations are less prescriptive than any other set of rules in motorsport history. They don't so much as lay down what a manufacturer can and can't do as in LMP1, rather they set out the outcome of the design process. There are performance windows, which include maximum downforce and minimum drag figures, into which the cars must fit. And engine power – and the way it is delivered to the track – is strictly controlled. And then a Balance of Performance is invoked to level up all the cars.

The rules have been written to dramatically reduce costs

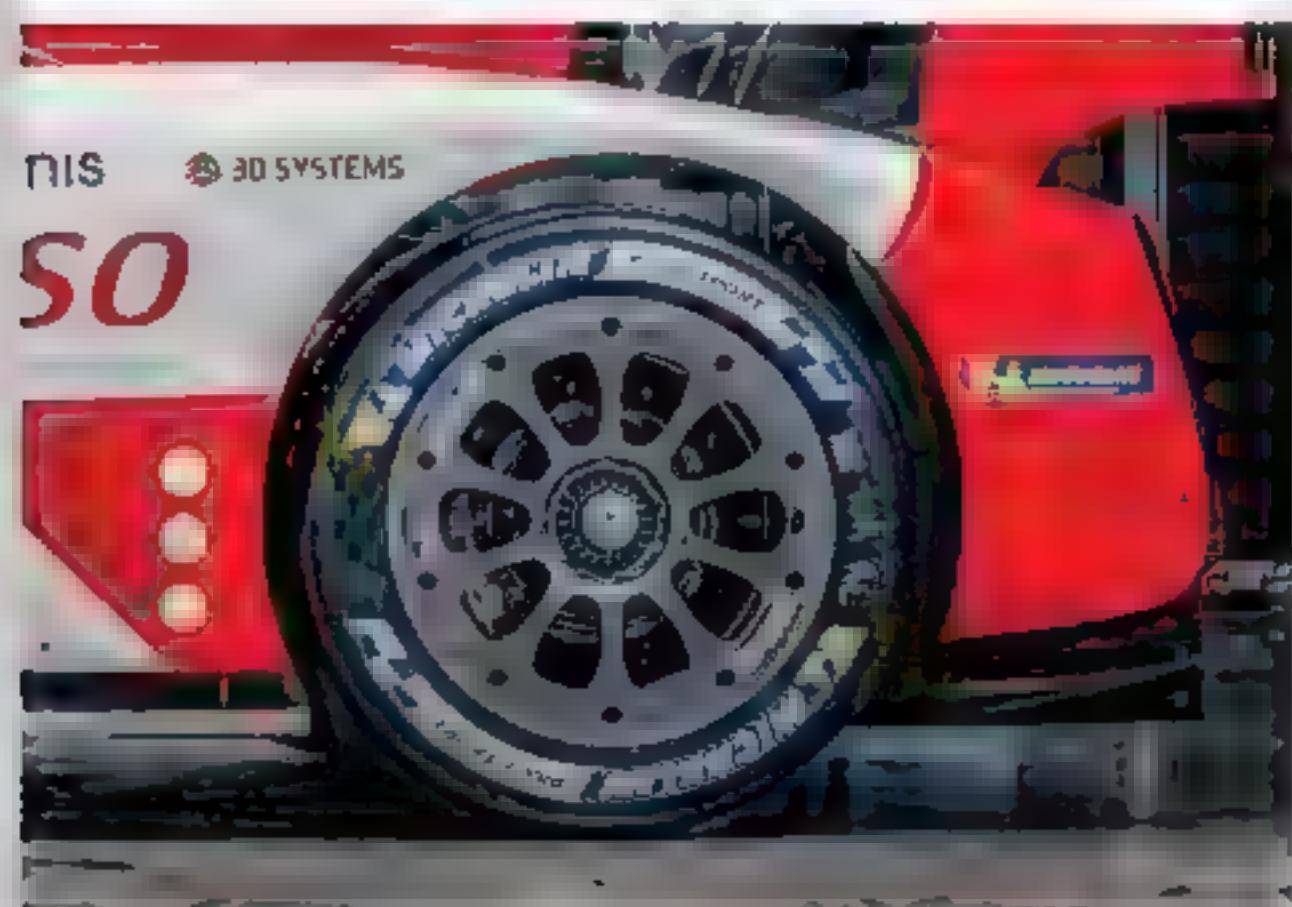
and speeds. The budgets for an LMH programme are just a fraction of those in LMP1. There's no way of knowing for sure how much a manufacturer puts into its racing, but Toyota could now be spending as little as one third of its P1 budget.

What we can say for sure is that the cars are dramatically slower than their P1 predecessors. The target race lap time for an LMH around the 8.47-mile Circuit de la Sarthe at Le Mans is 3m30s. Compare that to the 3m20s average for the winning Toyota TS050 HYBRID in 2018.



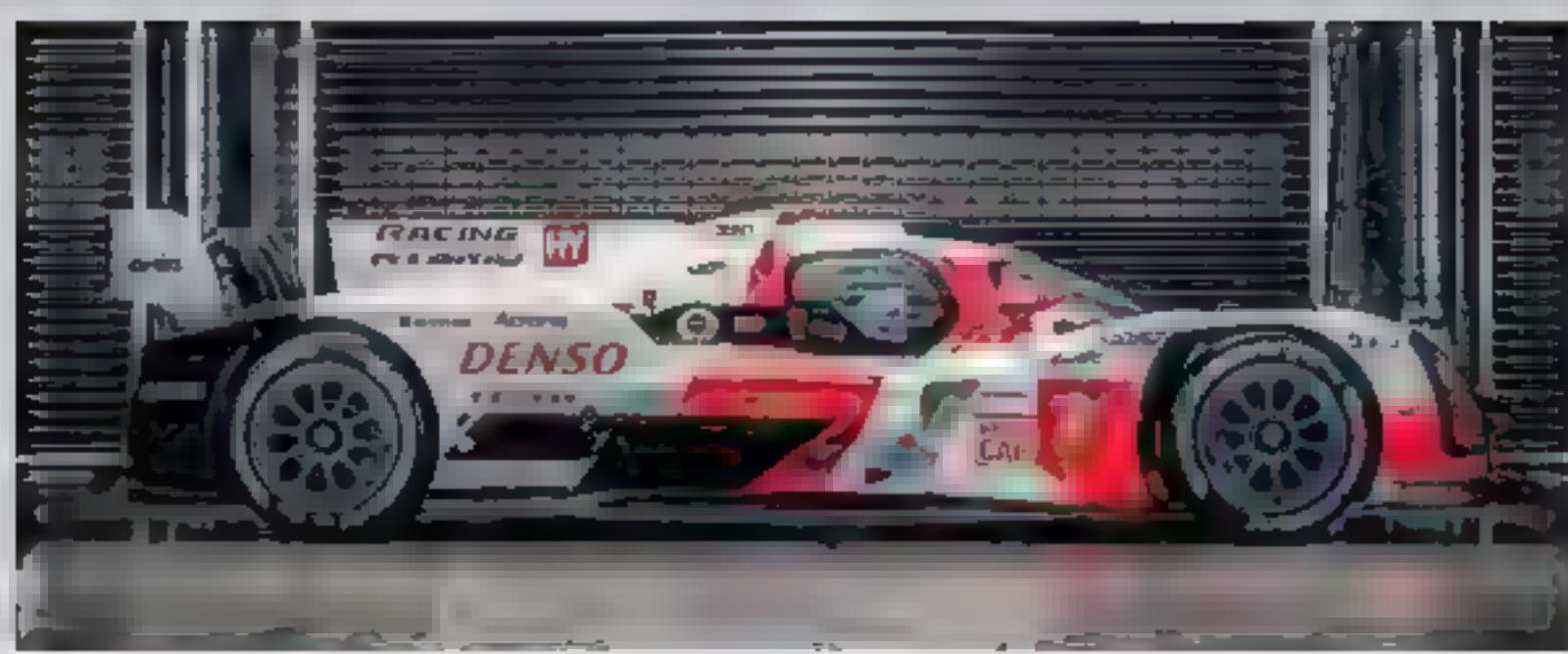
Wheels and tyres

LMH cars can run with 14in wide tyres front and rear or 13.5in fronts and 15in rears. Toyota has gone the first route, Glickenhaus the second. The idea is that the wider rears will make up for the advantage on tyre wear of running an all-wheel-drive car.



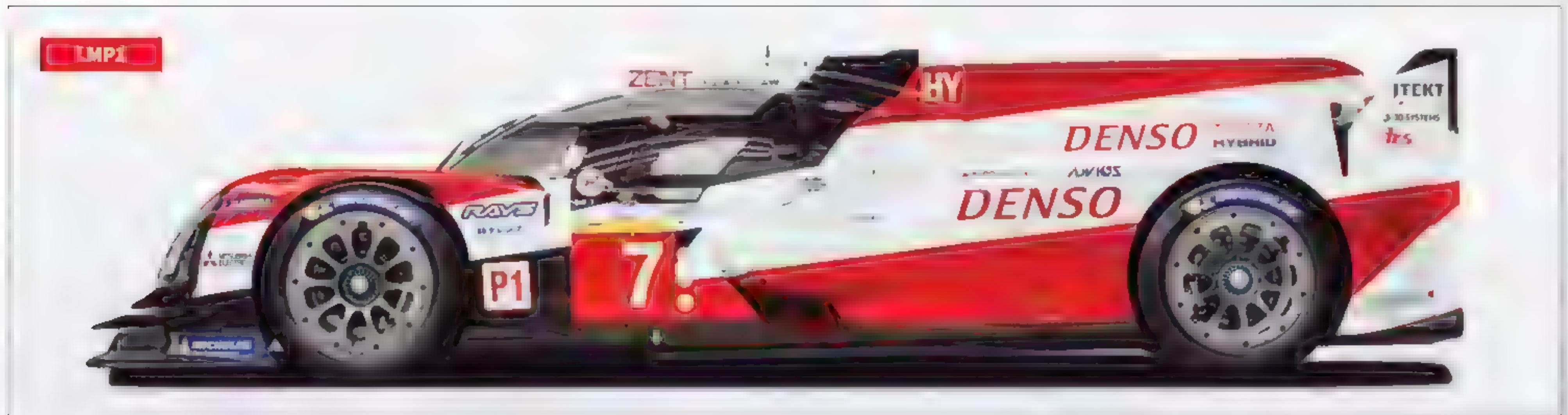
Styling

The new freedoms in the aerodynamic rules and the relatively modest targets allow manufacturers to give their machinery a road-car look. Toyota has developed its new GR010 HYBRID LMH in parallel with a forthcoming super-sportscar for the road. Peugeot, whose 9X8 will arrive in the WEC some time next season, has imbued its car with styling cues from its model range.



Heavier cars

The weight for an LMH car yoyoed up and down from when the broad tenets of the rules were laid out at Le Mans in 2018. It went as high as 1100kg before settling at 1030kg for two-wheel-drive cars and 1040kg for four-wheel drive. The final downward shift reflected the convergence with the LMP2-based LMDh rules that come on stream in 2023. The higher weight than LMP1, which had an 878kg base minimum for hybrid machinery, reflects the drive to reduce costs.



Dorsal fin

The Toyota and the Glickenhaus both have dorsal fins like LMP1 cars, but the strict dimensions laid down in the old rules from 2011 have disappeared. Now figures on lateral stability are laid down in the rules. Peugeot's show car has a much smaller fin, while the strakes on the rear wing of the Glickenhaus are also linked to this regulation.



Bigger cars

An LMH car is bigger than an LMP1 in every dimension. The rules allow an LMH to be 250mm longer, 25mm wider and 100mm higher to help the designers give the cars that road-car look. The increase in height also reflects new cockpit safety standards that define a more upright seating position. The overhangs, front and rear, are also longer.

Hybrid systems

The LMP1 rules allowed for two energy-retrieval systems. Toyota went for front and rear-axle systems, while Porsche harvested energy from the exhaust gases as well as the front wheels. The new rules allow for only a single kinetic system on the front. It was mandatory in the original LMH regulations published in December 2018. The class has now been opened up to non-hybrid machinery, and Glickenhaus has taken this route.

Engine power

An LMP1 hybrid had the potential to push out approaching 1000bhp – about half and half from its internal combustion engine and its motor-generator units. Total power in LMH has been reduced to just under 700bhp (520kW is the figure laid down in the rules). Hybrid power is down from 300kW to 200kW, which means a higher output from the conventional engine. That explains why Toyota now runs a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 rather than a 2.4-litre.

Aero

Manufacturers used to turn up to Le Mans with aerodynamics conceived specifically for the unique demands of the Circuit de la Sarthe. A single aerodynamic configuration is allowed in the LMH rules. A single adjustable device is permitted: Toyota has chosen the rear wing, while Glickenhaus has only told us that it has opted for an element in the front aero package.





From 90-minute sprints to twice round the clock

LMP2 is filled with talent this year, including 11 racers from the world of Formula 1

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport
IMAGES

◀ KEVIN MAGNUSEN

Kevin Magnussen will be killing two birds with one stone when he races at the Le Mans 24 Hours next week. He'll be getting some all-important experience of the big race under his belt in advance of joining Peugeot's World Endurance Championship assault next year, and he'll be fulfilling a long-held ambition of racing with his father, Jan, in one of the world's big enduros.

The Magnussens are teaming up in a High Class Racing ORECA-Gibson 07 together with fellow Dane Anders Fjordbach. It is an additional car from the Danish entrant to the one his team-mates are racing full-time in the World Endurance Championship this year, and presents an opportunity for father and son to do something that they've talked about for years.

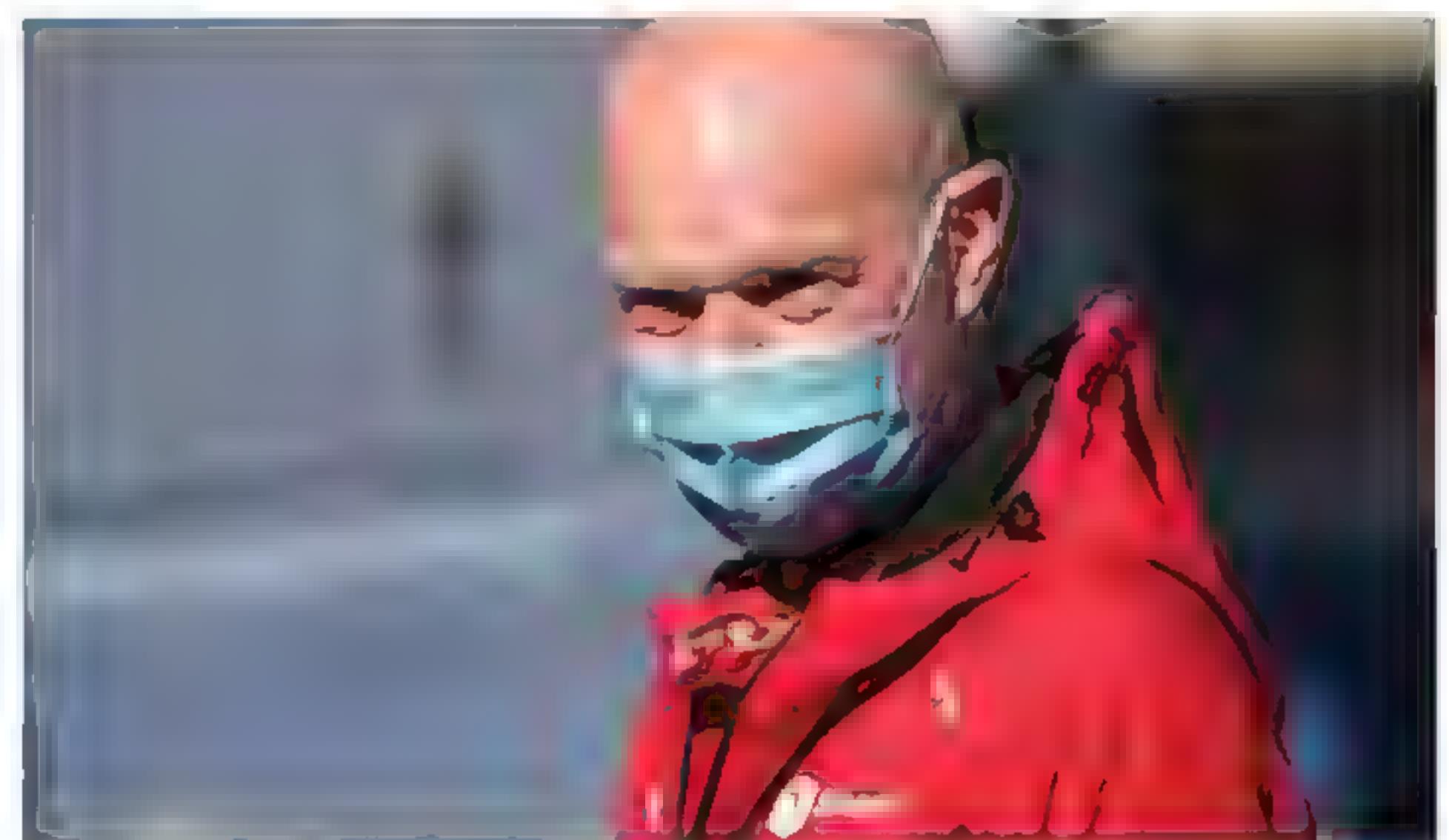
"Sharing a car with my dad is something I've always wanted to do," says Magnussen, whose F1 career drew to a close last year after 119 GPs with McLaren, Renault and Haas. "Le Mans is the biggest thing we could do together, so it really is a dream come true."

Magnussen says he first started talking about teaming up with dad at Le Mans when he was about 15. They got serious in the 2010s when they discussed Kevin joining his father at Corvette Racing as a third driver for the long races on its programme.

"A lot of the time it was just me and dad talking over the dinner table," recalls the 28-year-old. "But there were years when it got more serious and dad was working hard to make it happen. Corvette was keen, but the problem was the Sebring 12 Hours clashing with the grand prix in Melbourne. They didn't just need me to do Le Mans, they needed me to do the long races in the IMSA SportsCar Championship as well. It always fell down on that."

Magnussen Jr is racing full-time in IMSA with Chip Ganassi Racing this year, a deal done after he signed his Peugeot contract. The French manufacturer supported his efforts to get on the grid this season. "They see it as a great opportunity for me to learn about Le Mans," he says. "Driving with my dad, someone who's done the race 22 times, is a great way to do that. That's going to be invaluable for the future."

But Magnussen's maiden Le Mans won't just be about learning: "I don't see why we shouldn't be dreaming about winning LMP2."



▲ JAN MAGNUSEN

When Jan Magnussen was left out of a drive at Corvette Racing at the end of 2019 after he was the loser in a politically charged game of musical chairs, retirement was the last thing on his mind. The news that he wouldn't be getting a new contract after 16 years with the Chevrolet squad explains why he didn't do much last year.

"I didn't want to stop, though I was afraid that might have been the result," says the Dane, who made 24 F1 starts with McLaren and Stewart in 1995 and 1997-98. "It all happened very late."

A deal to race in the TCR Denmark series came along pretty quickly, as did the chance to test for the High Class squad with which he is racing in the WEC this year. A plan for an additional entry at Le Mans last year that Magnussen would have driven fell over, but he has segued into a full-time drive for 2021 – only with a difference, because he's swapped cars for Le Mans.

Magnussen reckons this was the last chance for him to do Le Mans with son Kevin: "He's off to Peugeot and when he's done, I'm going to be far too old: this was absolutely the last shot."

"Kevin first came to Le Mans in 2003 when I was driving the Goh Audi R8 and fell in love with the race," he says. "We've been talking about doing it together from even before he started racing cars. Regardless of the result, doing Le Mans with my son at a time when I'm still competitive will be one of the biggest things I've done in my career."

Magnussen believes he's still got a few more Le Mans starts in him yet. This year will be his 23rd participation, if you include 2015, when he was ruled out of the race after a crash in qualifying. And he definitely does: "I've still got the bruises to show I was there."

"I love racing and I love driving these cars," he says. "I'm going to keep going for as long as the team want me. They're going to have to kick me out." ▶



The Magnussens will drive for High Class Racing

JUAN PABLO MONTOYA ▶

Juan Pablo Montoya got a call on his mobile late last summer from a number he didn't recognise. It turned out to be DragonSpeed boss Elton Julian offering him a drive for Le Mans a couple of weeks hence. The seven-time grand prix winner said yes to the chance to drive a P2 car, and again when he had the opportunity to join the team full time in this year's WEC, his first European-based programme since the end of his F1 career in 2006.

"I was here in Europe, I had a weekend off, so I thought, 'let's go,'" recalls the former Williams and McLaren F1 driver. "Elton told me that there would be no media or stuff like that. What wasn't to like? I'd really enjoyed doing Le Mans the first time with United [Autosports in 2018]."

A move to Europe for this season to oversee son Sebastian's fledgling career in Formula 4 in Italy and Germany, as well as a lack of opportunities in North America after the end of the Penske Acura programme that yielded the IMSA SportsCar Championship title in 2019, explains why he stayed on for this year.

"There was nothing for me in America, and the Indy 500 thing [with the Schmidt-run McLaren squad] came after I'd agreed to race for Elton," explains the 45-year-old. "I like racing for his team; it's all very relaxed."

Yet still challenging, he insists. Montoya is racing in the Pro-Am section of the LMP2 division, and acknowledges that a big part of his job is getting team patron and Bronze-rated Henrik Hedman up to speed in the ORECA they share with Ben Hanley.

"It's all about making Henrik go as fast as possible," he says. "That's part of the programme, going through the data and the onboards; it's something I enjoy."

"We've been on the podium every race: our target is the championship and to try to win Pro-Am at Le Mans."



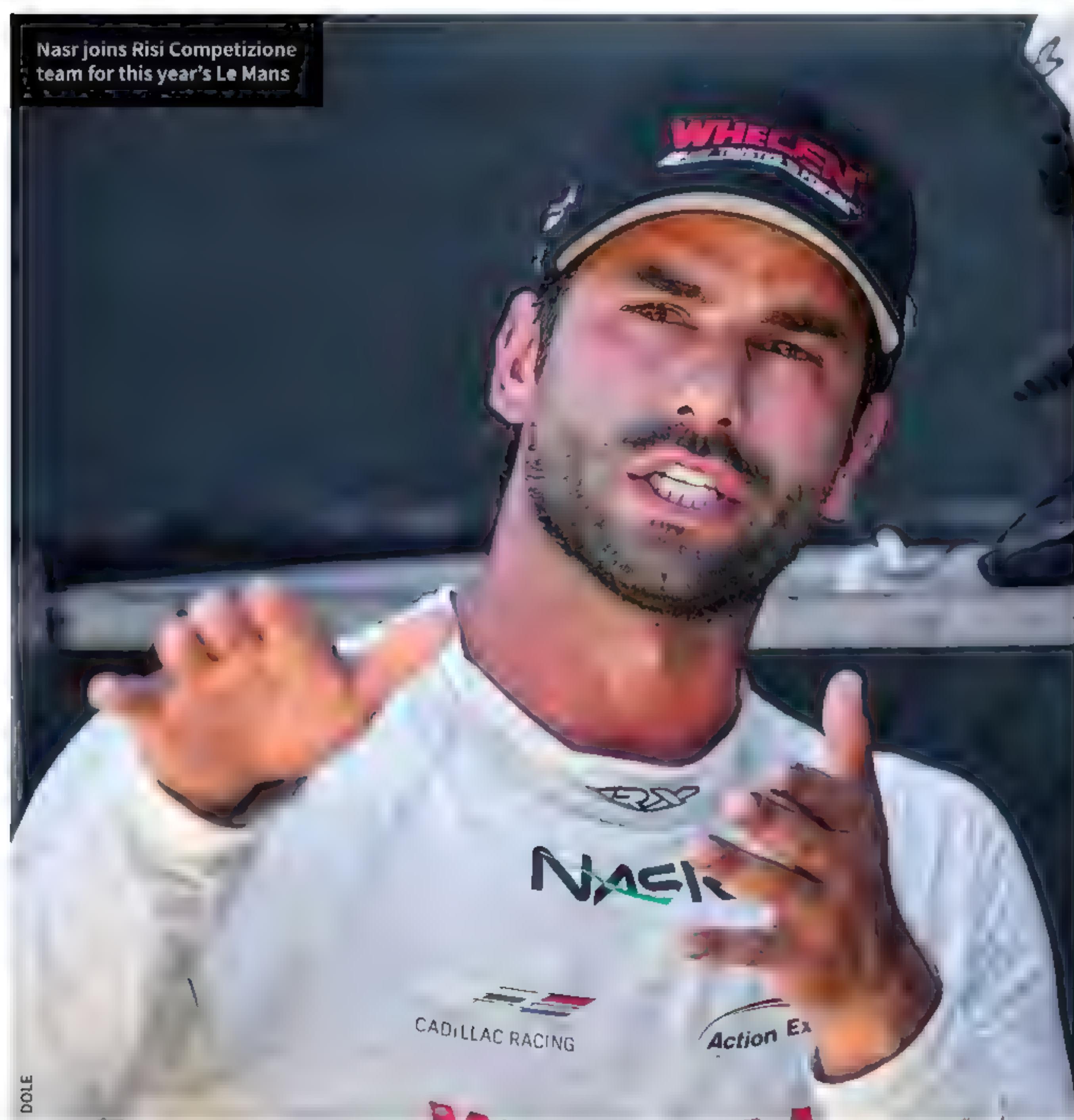
◀ FELIPE NASR

Felipe Nasr got his first experience of sportscar racing as a 19-year-old when he contested the 2012 Daytona 24 Hours as the prize for winning the Sunoco Daytona Challenge during his championship year in British Formula 3. So when his F1 career came to an end after 39 starts with Sauber in 2015-16, he turned back to endurance racing to continue his career.

"When I finished F1, I looked at the big championships and races I wanted to win," says the 28-year-old Brazilian. "Daytona, Sebring and Le Mans, too, were right up there on my list. I want to have those big races on my CV."

He ticked off the Sebring 12 Hours in 2019, and has come close at the Daytona 24 Hours with a trio of podiums. Now the IMSA SportsCar Championship regular with Action Express Racing has turned his attention to Le Mans, a race he first contested back in 2018 with the Villorba Corse squad. This time, he's doing the race in a Risi Competizione ORECA shared with Oliver Jarvis and Ryan Cullen.

"I wanted to do Le Mans again, but only with the right package," he says. "That's what I've got with Risi and Olly and Ryan. I feel like we are in a good position heading into Le Mans."





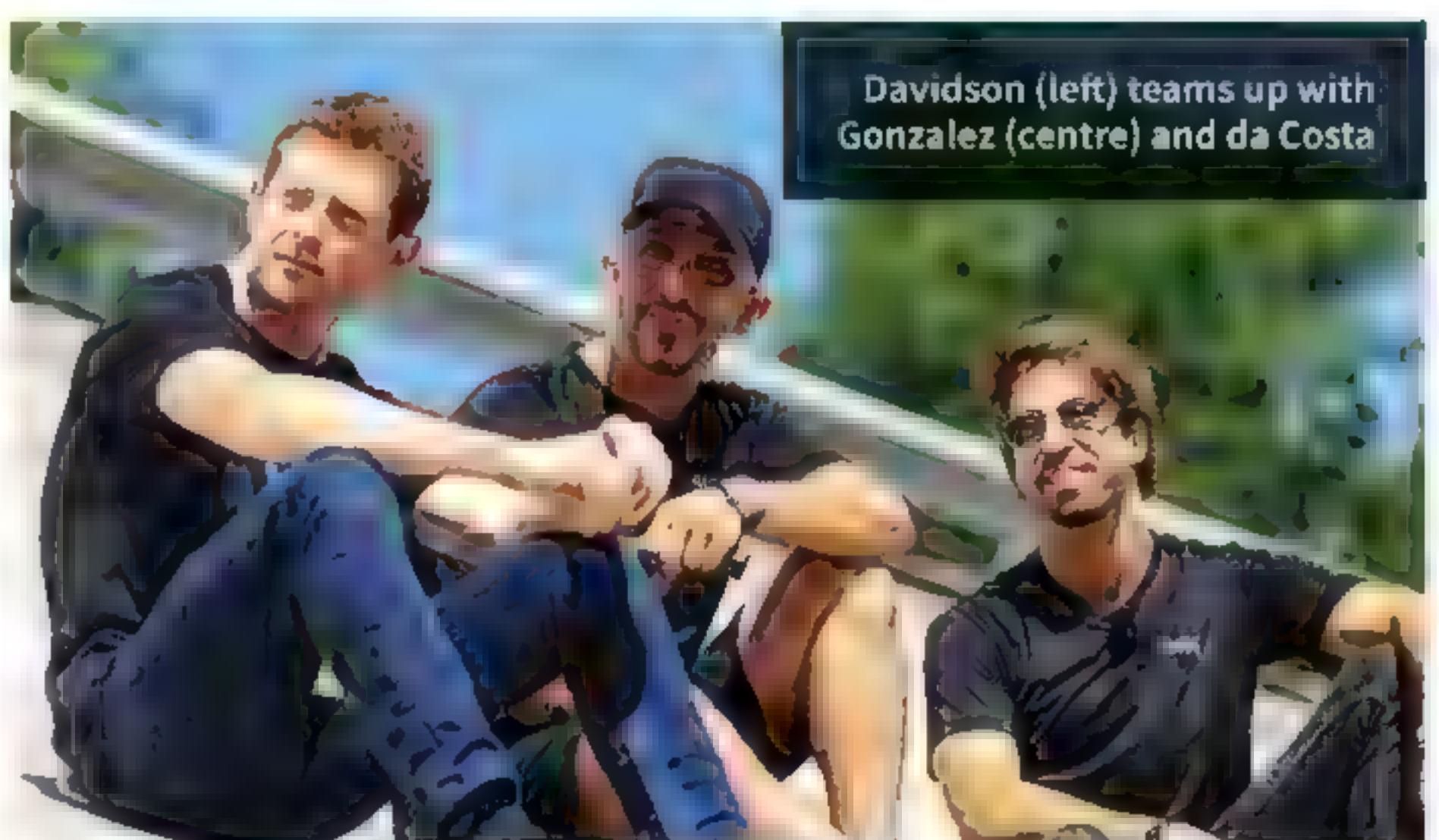
ANTHONY DAVIDSON ▶

Anthony Davidson reckons there's a good chance he'd be a retired racing driver today had he not lost his seat at Toyota to Fernando Alonso for the 2018-19 campaign. That resulted in him making a move to LMP2 two races into the so-called superseason – and he's enjoyed every minute since.

The former Minardi and Super Aguri racer signed a new contract with Toyota in 2016 that was scheduled to take him up to the end of 2019. That was the year of his 40th birthday, and he says it would have been a neat time to hang up the helmet.

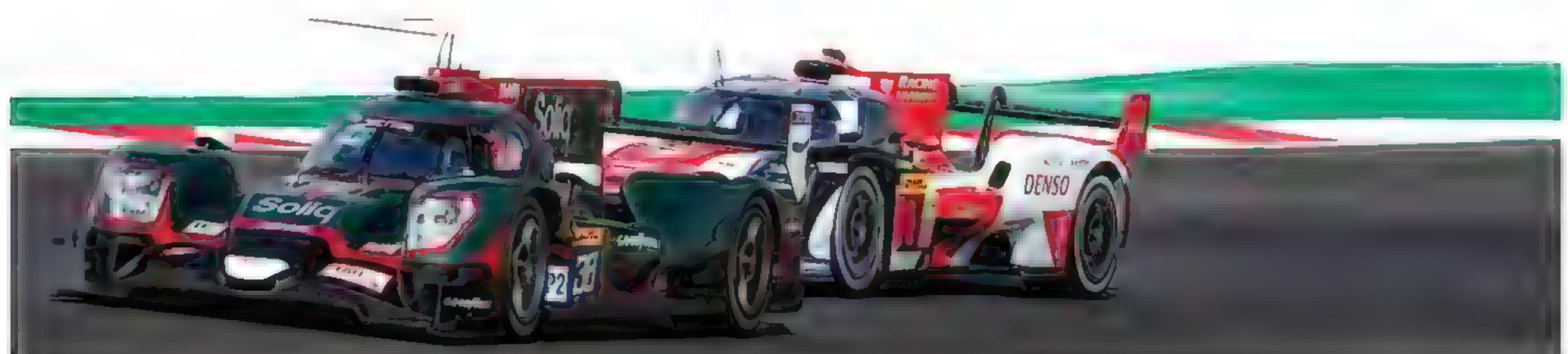
"When you are with a manufacturer there's a lot of pressure to perform at your best," says the 2014 WEC title winner. "In my mind I gave myself three more years to try to win Le Mans and then it would come to a natural end. I was definitely toying with the idea of just stopping completely like Allan [McNish] did."

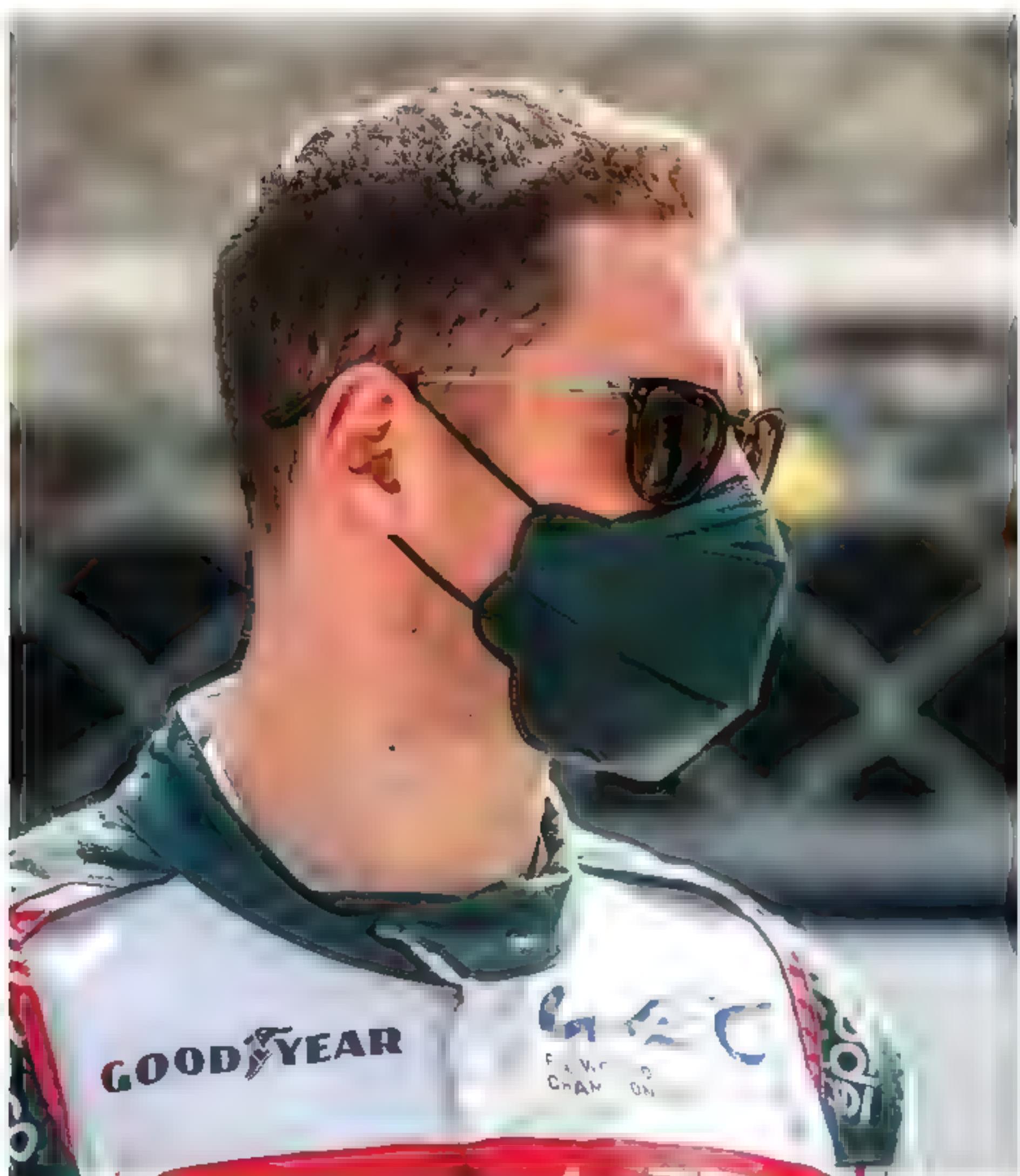
Davidson fulfilled a reserve role for Toyota in the opening two 2018-19 WEC rounds before joining DragonSpeed. It was the result of another call from team boss Elton Julian. "When Elton called me I thought, 'You know what? P2 is a really competitive environment and I still have a lot to give,'" says Davidson. "The environment is a lot less pressured than when you are working with a manufacturer."



Davidson has won races in P2 in each of his first three seasons in the class with DragonSpeed and, since 2019-20, Jota, each time driving with Roberto Gonzalez. Antonio Felix da Costa joined them last season for a campaign that yielded a further four podiums.

"It's been a lot of fun," says Davidson. "In a way I needed to fall back in love with racing and that's what I've done." ▶





◀ STOFFEL VANDOORNE

Former McLaren F1 driver Stoffel Vandoorne has established himself in Formula E with Mercedes and is now back in the WEC in P2. He makes no secret of his desire to become one of the pack of drivers who dovetail factory programmes in both the FIA's electric-vehicle series and endurance racing.

"It would be the best of both worlds," says the Belgian, a race winner in FE who also has a Le Mans podium to his name with SMP Racing in 2019. "It would make for a busy programme, but I'd prefer that than not being busy enough."

Vandoorne made two starts in the WEC aboard one of SMP's AER-engined BR Engineering BR1s, at Spa and then Le Mans two years ago, and in doing so ticked a box.

"When F1 stopped and I had the FE gig, the next thing was to do those special races, and Le Mans was one of those," he explains. "But I wanted to come back into endurance because I knew what was coming; the future of the championship looks very promising. I think it is important to be there and have the experience."

Vandoorne has linked up with good friend and ex-Formula 2 racer Sean Gelael to race a Jota ORECA along with Tom Blomqvist in the full WEC this year. It was dubbed as a 'super-team' ahead of the start of the season. They scored a third first time out at Spa and then a close second to the sister Jota car at the Algarve circuit.

"When we haven't made mistakes, we've been on the podium," he says. "Le Mans is a different game, but we've been preparing well and we're confident we can bring home another good result."



▲ PAUL DI RESTA

Paul di Resta was in the paddock at the 2017 Belgian Grand Prix in his twin roles as Williams reserve driver and a Sky Sports expert commentator when he was approached by McLaren's Zak Brown. The American didn't want to talk shop, rather offer him the chance to drive an LMP2 for his United Autosports squad.

The chance to drive a United Ligier-Nissan JSP217 at the following January's Daytona 24 Hours began a new chapter in the former Force India and Williams F1 driver's career. More than four years on from his sportscar debut, he has a Le Mans class victory to his name, has helped United to world championship glory, and has a contract in his briefcase to drive for Peugeot when it joins the WEC with its 9X8 Le Mans Hypercar next season.

"My response to Zak's question was 'absolutely,'" recalls the long-time Mercedes DTM driver. "Mercedes knew it was leaving the DTM and didn't want to stand in my way. I wasn't sure what it was going to be like, but I got the bug for endurance racing straight away."

Di Resta followed up on his Daytona appearance with drives for United at the Sebring and Watkins Glen IMSA enduros, with a maiden Le Mans start sandwiched in between. He then won the 2018-19 Asian Le Mans Series together with Phil Hanson as a lead-in to a WEC campaign in 2019-20. He only missed out on becoming a world champion together with Hanson and Filipe Albuquerque because a clash with his DTM programme with

WILL STEVENS ▶

Will Stevens is one of the most experienced and successful LMP2 drivers in the ex-F1 pack. The Briton has been in the class since his 18-start F1 career with Caterham and Manor ended in 2015, winning in the WEC four times and the ELMS once.

But like so many of the drivers in the category, the Panis Racing driver has his eyes on what's around the corner. "P2 is a good place to be, but I want to move forward in my career," says Stevens, who is teamed at Panis with James Allen and Julien Canal. "Le Mans Hypercar is here and LMDh is coming, and 100% I want to be in a factory car. It's a role I'm sure I would excel at, because helping to develop a car is something I do with McLaren as a test and development driver."

Stevens has been with Panis for four seasons, but also contested the 2019-20 WEC with the Jota-run Jackie Chan DC Racing squad. Both of 'his' cars were in the mix at Le Mans last year: the Jota ORECA he was driving was leading P2 when it suffered alternator failure in the evening, while the Panis entry ended up third.

"Panis has progressed a lot as a team, and we've taken our first win in the ELMS this year," he says. "I'm sure if we execute well we are going to be there or thereabouts."



Stevens (right), Canal (centre) and Allen are the Panis trio



Aston Martin ruled him out of one of the races.

His performances with United were vital in securing the Peugeot contract, di Resta says. "It showed that I could work with team-mates, be part of a team, which I know was important," he explains. "They obviously did their analysis and that's how I got signed."

Peugeot was keen for di Resta to race as much as possible this year. He's no longer part of United's full-season WEC line-up, but is racing at Le Mans in an additional entry for the race together with Alex Lynn and Wayne Boyd.

It looks like one of the most formidable line-ups in the class, and di Resta doesn't disagree: "We're going in believing that we've got a good chance to win. That's our intent."

▼ ROBERTO MERHI

Roberto Merhi has been plying his trade in LMP2 on and off since he graced the F1 grid with a partial season with Manor in 2015. It was the British team that gave him his sportscar chance in the WEC the following year. Now he's back with a full-season programme in 2021 and his sights firmly set on the future.

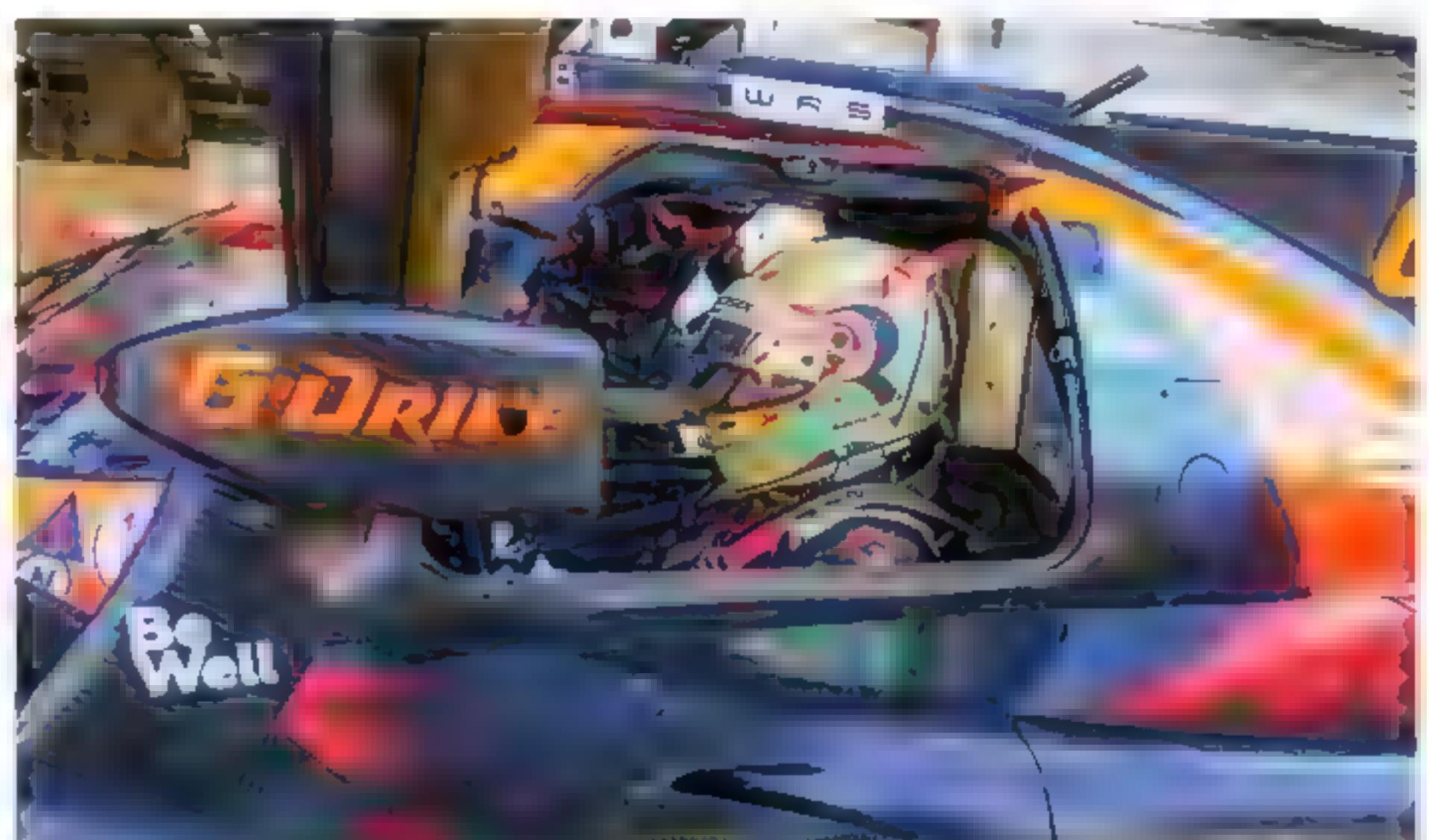
With sportscar racing entering a bright new era with the arrival of new manufacturers at the front of the grid, the Spaniard knows where he wants to go after signing up for a full ELMS programme with G-Drive Racing this year.

"The target is to get a factory seat," he says. "That could be in the WEC or it could be in America in IMSA."

Not that he's playing down the ELMS: "The series is getting stronger and stronger. The level of the teams and drivers is now really very high. I prefer it that way, because it makes it more fun."

Merhi and team-mates Rui Andrade and John Falb have finished either first or second in Pro-Am in each of the four races so far and have also notched up a third overall. They are well placed to challenge for Pro-Am honours at Le Mans, he reckons, despite a line-up in which he is the only professional.

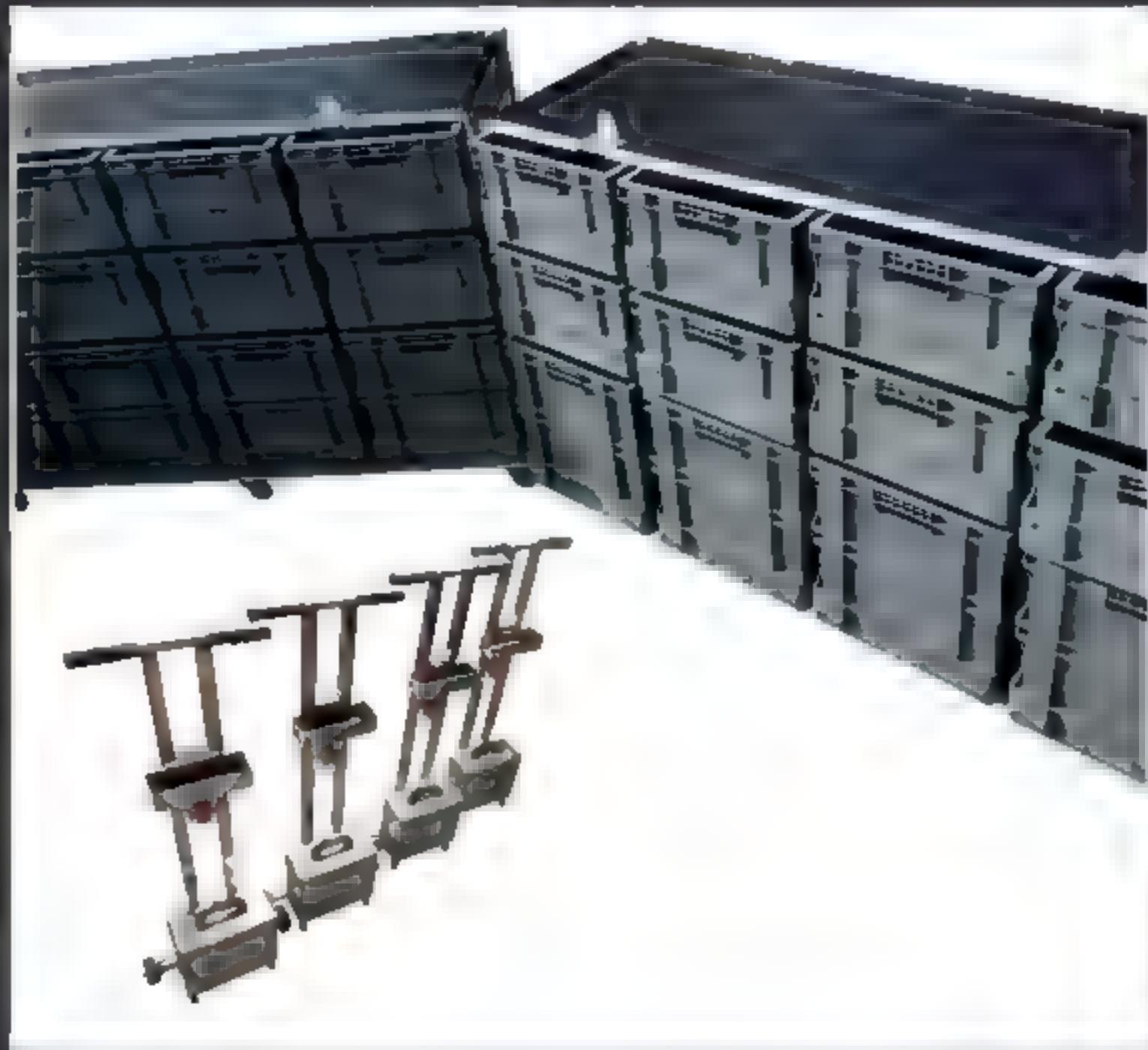
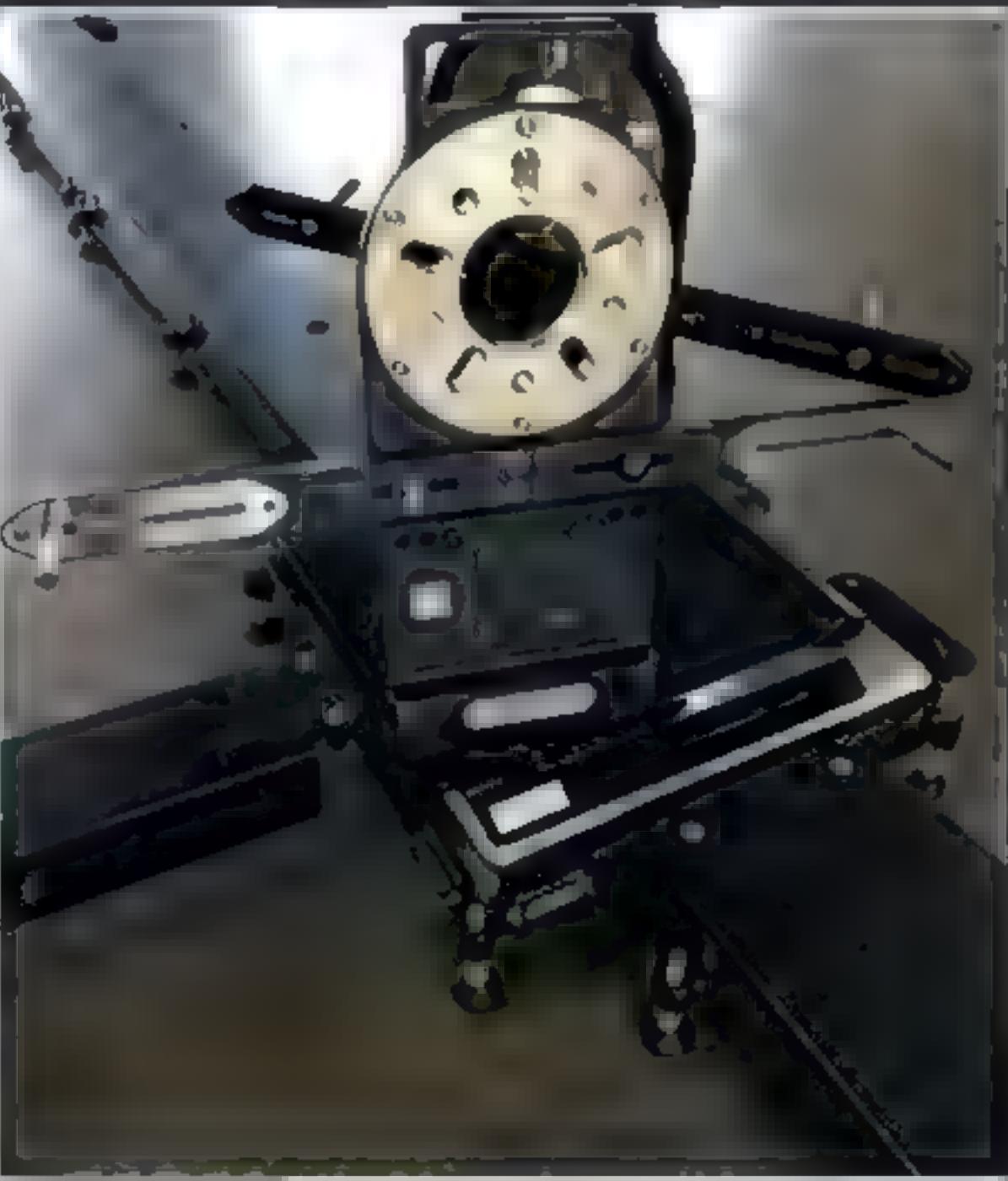
"There are some cars that have two pros, but John is a very strong Bronze – he's quick and he doesn't make mistakes," says Merhi, adding that Angolan sportscar rookie Andrade is "improving by the race". ▶





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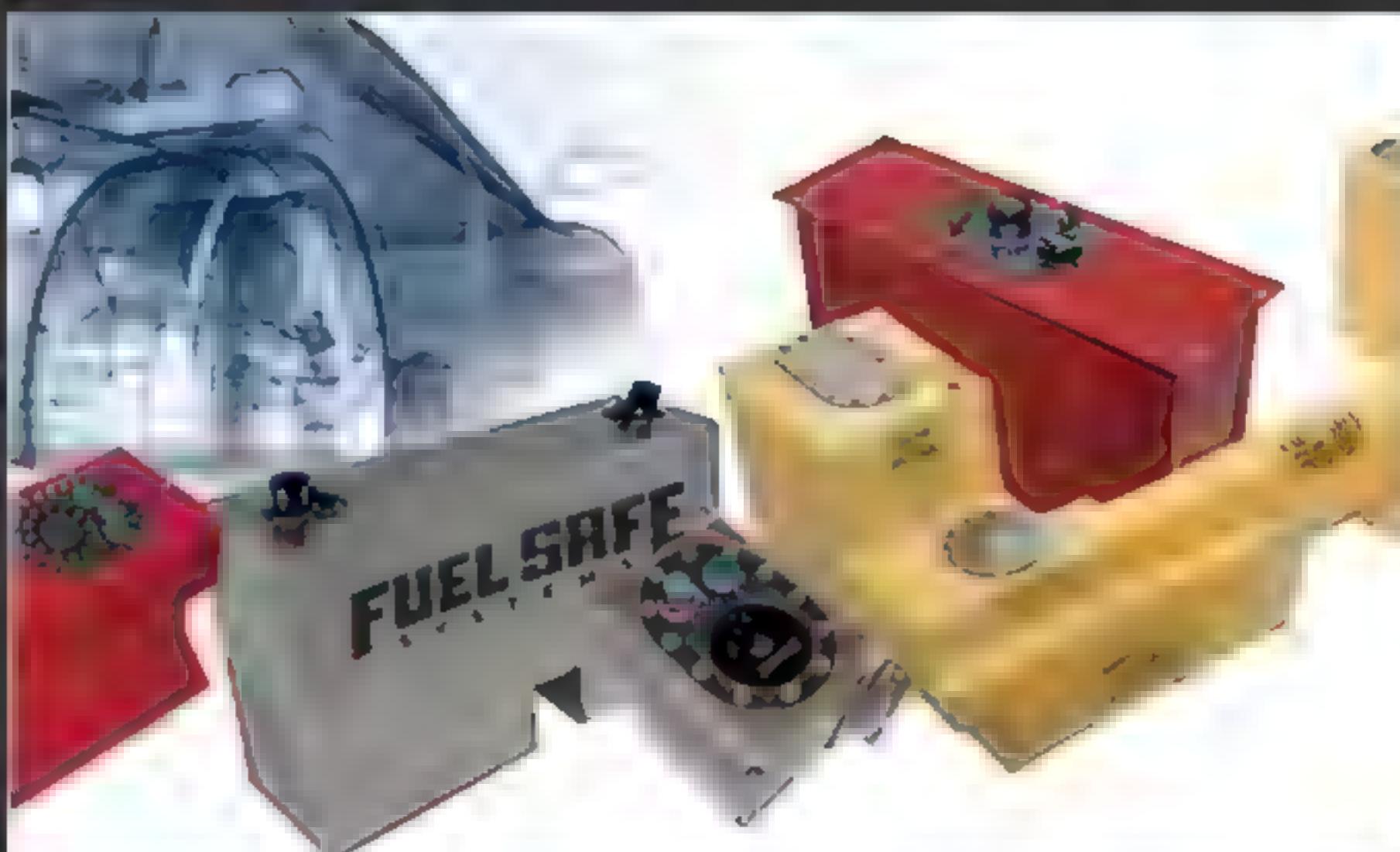


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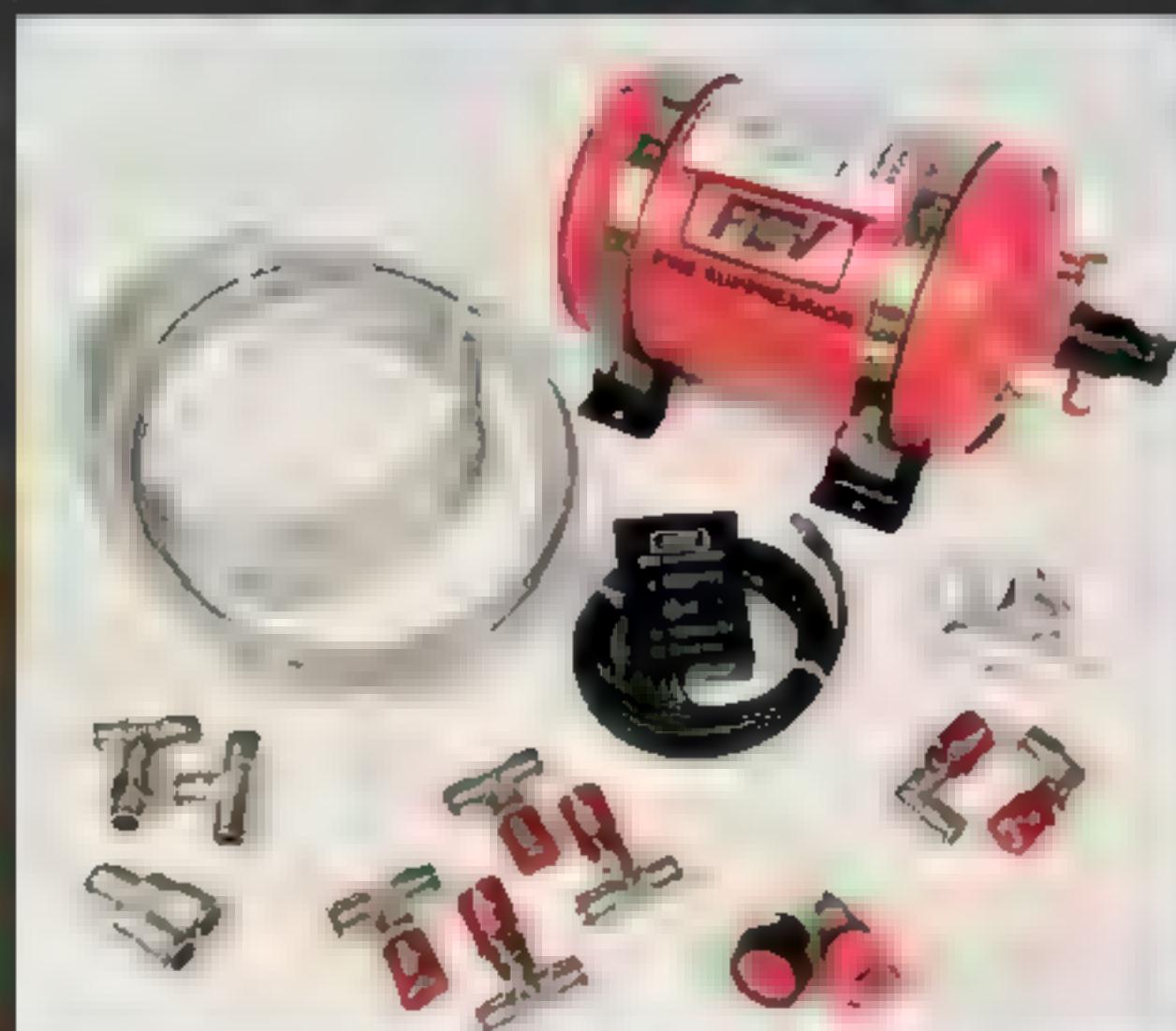
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ROBERT KUBICA ▶

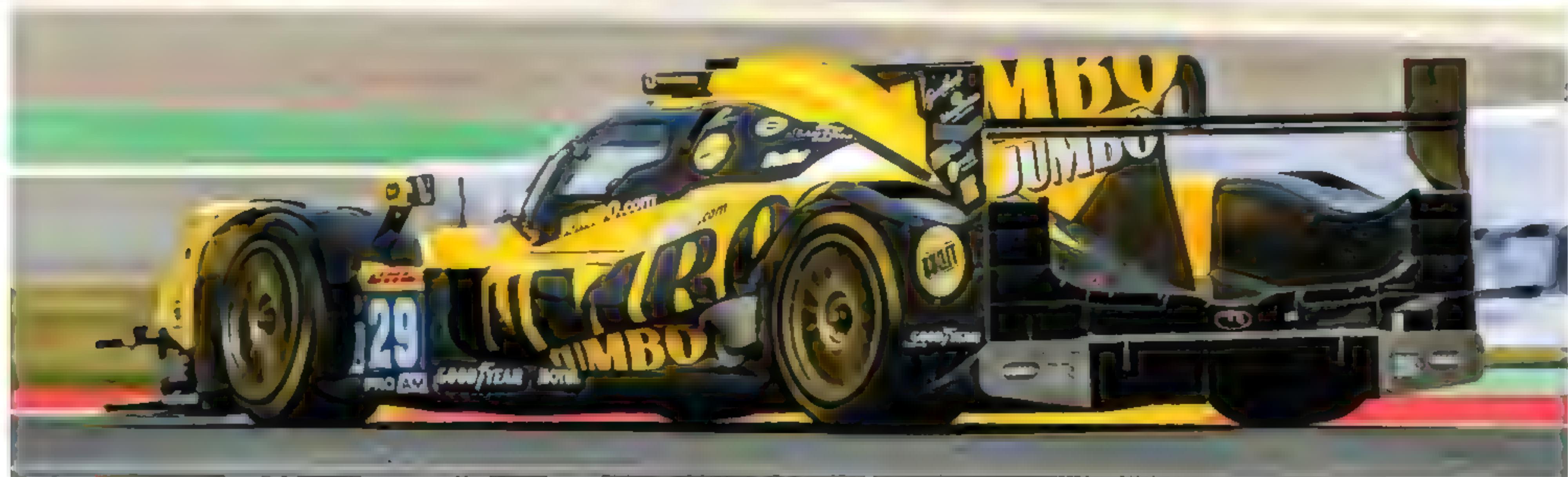
Robert Kubica has two jobs these days: fulfilling a reserve role with the Alfa Romeo F1 team and racing. Last year that meant driving an ART-run BMW in the DTM, but the German championship's shift to GT3 rules sent him looking for a new opportunity.

The Pole reckoned racing a GT car wouldn't have been compatible with his F1 job that encompasses the odd FP1 appearance and test. Racing an LMP2 prototype, he reasoned, was a better fit, which is why he's now competing in the ELMS with WRT.

"I have my other job with Alfa and whatever I do in terms of racing has to fit with that," says Kubica, whose F1 career has so far stretched to 97 starts either side of the rallying accident in which he suffered severe arm injuries in early 2011. "I was attracted by the new challenge of endurance racing, and Le Mans in particular."

He and team-mates Louis Deletraz and Yifei Ye have already won twice in the ELMS this year. They are leading the championship as they head into the big one, and Kubica reckons that if they can replicate their early-season form they will have a chance.

"Barcelona was probably our best executed race," he says. "We've proved that if we have a smooth weekend and do our jobs on the track and in the pits, we have all the ingredients to be at the front."



▲ GIEDO VAN DER GARDE

Giedo van der Garde calls himself a semi-professional driver these days. He called time on his racing career nearly five years ago, only to be tempted back to drive in the all-Dutch Racing Team Nederland line-up by team boss Frits van Eerd.

Van der Garde, who started 19 grands prix with Caterham in 2013, hung up his helmet after his first spell in LMP2 in 2016. He started to look beyond racing after he'd won the ELMS in a Jota-run ORECA-Nissan 05 fielded under the G-Drive banner for himself, Harry Tincknell and Simon Dolan.

"There wasn't really a lot going on, so I decided to stop," he says. "I started a real estate company and began to do some other things. Then Frits came along with a really nice offer. It's not so many races, so it allows me to do my day job and it's not such high pressure. We have a lot of fun and laughs together, but are still very professional when we get in the car."

"I take it very seriously out on the track and push it all the way. You may have seen some of my starts: I like to make it entertaining and it's good for Jumbo [van Eerd's supermarket chain that backs the RTN programme]."

RTN claimed a class victory in its second season in 2019-20 after a swap from the Daytech team to TDS Racing and from the Dallara chassis to an ORECA. It took a further three podiums on the way to fourth place in P2 teams' points as a line-up that included a Bronze-rated driver in van Eerd punched above its weight.

The new P2 Pro-Am sub-class, for crews containing a Bronze, has given RTN the chance to shoot for a world title, the primary target. "You always aim for the top, but in my mind we are going for the Pro-Am win," says van der Garde. "Frits's aim now is to win a world title and I think we have a good shot at it. A win at Le Mans will help us in that direction."

Asia's underdogs take on the might of the GT factories

The rising HubAuto team steps up to GTE Pro at Le Mans this year for an ambitious bid to take on the three works giants – and it has every reason to be optimistic

JAMES NEWBOLD



A

sked about his ambitions for the privateer HubAuto Racing Porsche squad that has made the brave step of taking on the GTE Pro factory teams at Le Mans this year, team principal and owner Morris Chen doesn't mince his words. "To be one of the greatest GT sports teams in the world," Chen replies. "Certainly, the greatest Asian GT sports team."

With three manufacturers – Porsche, Ferrari and Chevrolet – each fielding two cars, there will be stiff competition for a team primarily staffed by a Taiwanese, Malaysian and Australian crew that has only one previous Le Mans start, in the Am class with a Ferrari.

Headed up by Aussie team director Philip Di Fazio, who rose to prominence engineering Heikki Kovalainen and Will Power in their British Formula 3 days with Fortec, HubAuto's greatest success to date has come in GT3 competition. In 2019, it won the California 8 Hours round of SRO's Intercontinental GT Challenge at Laguna Seca, with Australians Nick Foster and Tim Slade joined by Ferrari factory driver Miguel Molina. But the team has shown clear ambitions to break into ACO-governed racing, prompted by Chen in 2015 making his Le Mans debut as a driver. That year, the first time his nation had been represented at the world-famous enduro, he was one of two Taiwanese drivers on the grid, along with the unrelated Jun San Chen.

"The dream quickly became to race in my own team in my own car," recalls Chen, "and then this year to be the first Asian and Taiwanese team to enter the GTE Pro class."

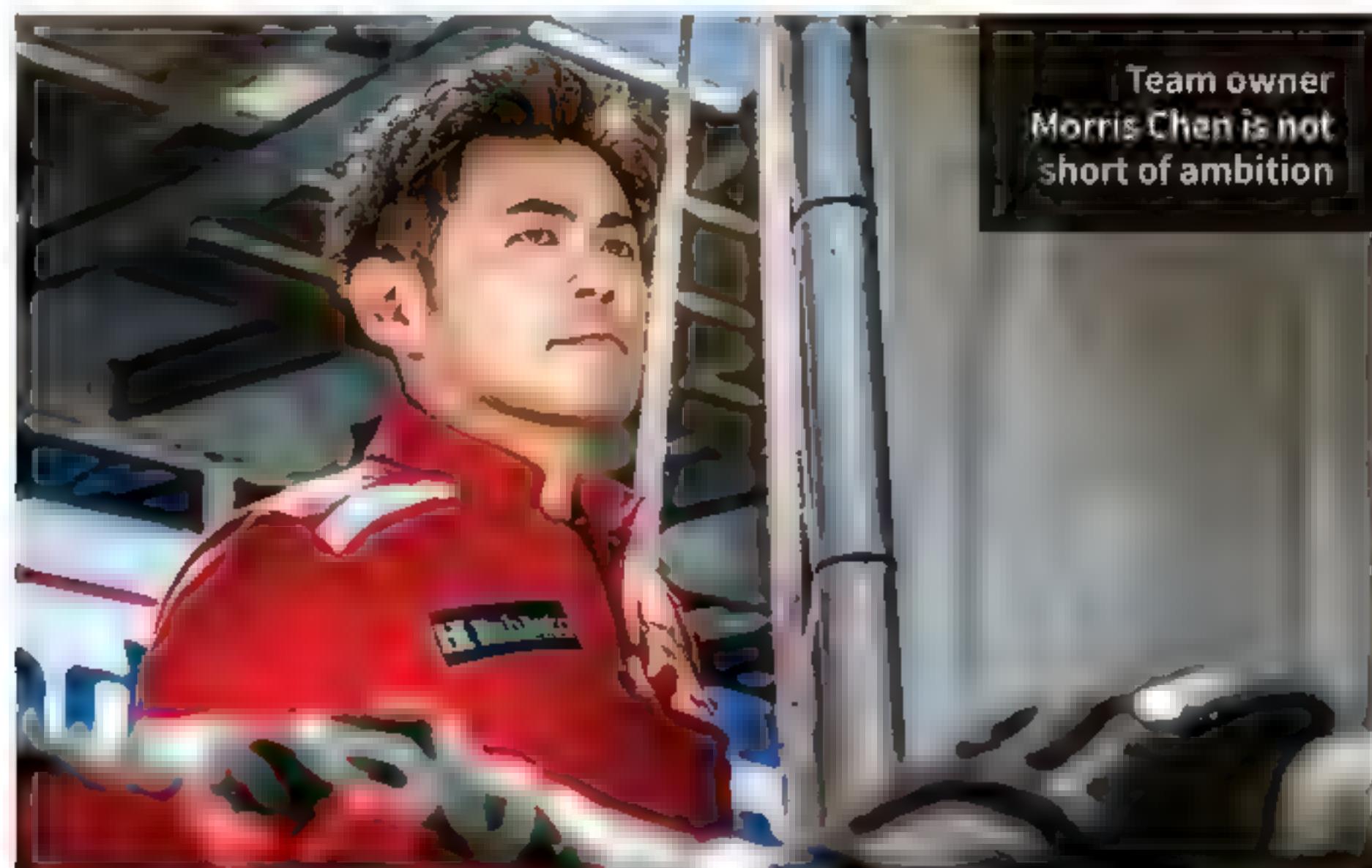


HubAuto earned an automatic invitation for the 24 Hours last year after winning the 2019-20 Asian Le Mans Series GT class title. Chen was joined at Le Mans by Tom Blomqvist and Marcos Gomes, the crew's Ferrari leading GTE Am for a time before being sidelined by engine failure.

"Every event you take away lessons learnt, and we did that last year," explains Di Fazio, who has extensive Porsche experience from his time in Carrera Cup Asia, GT Asia and the China GT



Corvette, Porsche and
Ferrari line up in GTE
Pro this year at Le Mans.



series. "Every race has its peculiarities and these are important to experience first-hand. Even though it's a different car for 2021, we still have critical data that we use and we learn from the entire experience."

The squad was originally slated to compete in the Am class again this year, but made the move into the Pro ranks when, Chen says, HubAuto's sponsors "felt we were ready to step up" and provided the support required to not rely on paying drivers.

"Our sponsors mainly were one of the key driving factors," he adds. "They believed in us and believed in the ability of the team. We were able to get the GTE Pro entry and they were prepared to provide the financial backing for us as a result."

It has allowed Chen to bring together a strong driver line-up of Maxime Martin, Alvaro Parente and Dries Vanthoor, each of whom currently has or recently has had factory GT driver status. Last year's GTE Pro Le Mans winner and WEC GT drivers'

"We want to be one of the greatest GT sports teams in the world, certainly the greatest Asian team"

championship runner-up Martin was left without a full-time drive when Aston Martin withdrew, leaving the Belgian with slim pickings for a chance to repeat his 2020 victory.

"I was definitely looking for a seat for Le Mans, I wanted to be back there, but I wasn't really thinking about the GTE Pro class," admits Martin. "If you are not with one of the manufacturers in GTE Pro, you have no real chance to be there."

But due to what he describes as "a bit of a coincidence", with a ▶

Super GT date clash ruling Kovalainen out of the running, Martin was given an unexpected opportunity to return alongside Parente and Vanthoor. The youngest member of the trio at 23, Audi GT3 ace Vanthoor will be eager to avenge his recent defeat in the Spa 24 Hours to Ferrari's Alessandro Pier Guidi and continue his 100% hit rate in the WEC – he won on his only previous appearance, in the GTE Am class at Le Mans in 2017.

Like its fellow privateer Porsche entry, the Proton Competition-run WeatherTech example that has works drivers Laurens Vanthoor and Earl Bamber joining Silver-graded Cooper MacNeil, HubAuto is using the same spec of 911 RSR as the factory. Introduced for the 2019-20 WEC, it endured a difficult debut at Le Mans last year, both cars struggling for pace and finishing

“To go to GTE Pro is ambitious because you know you will have to fight against the factories”

multiple laps down after power-steering and electrical issues.

But in the hands of the factory, it has taken pole for all three WEC races so far this year and won twice – Kevin Estre and Neel Jani followed their triumph at Spa with a hard-earned victory over Ferrari last time out at Monza – to firmly rule out any question marks over the competitiveness of the package.

HubAuto has partnered with long-time Porsche customer Project 1 to ease its turnaround from running a Mercedes at the Spa 24 Hours – where its Pro class entry finished a much-delayed 37th, hindered by damage from a left-rear puncture and various niggling issues – and get up to speed faster.

“They are always making things happen in a good way,” enthuses Martin of HubAuto. “In every series they go to and even when they run different cars, they have always been competitive, which shows [there is] a lot of quality behind. To go to GTE Pro is something very ambitious because you know that you will have to fight against the factories and you know how hard it can be, but it shows the mentality. If they do things, they do it to win. They are not just there to make up the numbers, that's for sure.”

Winning is always the goal, but Martin knows the team has a



huge mountain to climb, with all three drivers new to each other and the car. Vanthoor hasn't raced a Porsche since the 2016 Dubai 24 Hours, when he made his maiden foray in GT racing after moving across from single-seaters in a 991 Cup car, while 2016 Bathurst 12 Hours winner Parente has never raced a 911, having specialised in McLaren, Bentley and Acura GT3s. Like Vanthoor, the versatile Portuguese hasn't raced at Le Mans since 2017.

Martin has raced a 911 GT3-R this season at the Nurburgring and Spa 24 Hours, and his seat time in KCMG's Porsche at Spa increased significantly when team-mate Laurens Vanthoor (Dries's older brother) was knocked over by a quad bike in the paddock and forced to withdraw after driving less than four hours. But Martin points out that it's “another experience” altogether to racing the full-fat, mid-engined GTE version. “It's two different cars, the engine is in a different place so it's a completely different concept,” he says. “I'm going to start from scratch again.”

Practice will therefore be hugely important as the three drivers get used to the car and how each likes to drive it, before agreeing on a set-up direction that is the best compromise for the trio.

“Le Mans is very special because even though you can run a

GTE on a normal track with normal downforce, when you go to Le Mans with the low downforce it's already a different car to start with,” Martin states.

“It's going to be very hard for all three of us, but we are all professional drivers and we can definitely do a good job. For sure we won't be as well-prepared as the factory drivers because that's what they do all year long and they've been testing a lot in Le Mans configuration. But I think we can adapt and we will still have a good package





Porsche has twice beaten Ferrari in WEC this year, including at Spa



GILBERT MOTTO / SPORTIMAGE

to do something well. The team has quite some experience now also in this category, so I think it's more about our line-up, the experience I can give to my team-mates from what I know. From lap one until the last lap, it's qualifying. You have to push from the beginning to the end and if you don't have the pace, you have no chance. I think that's quite clear."

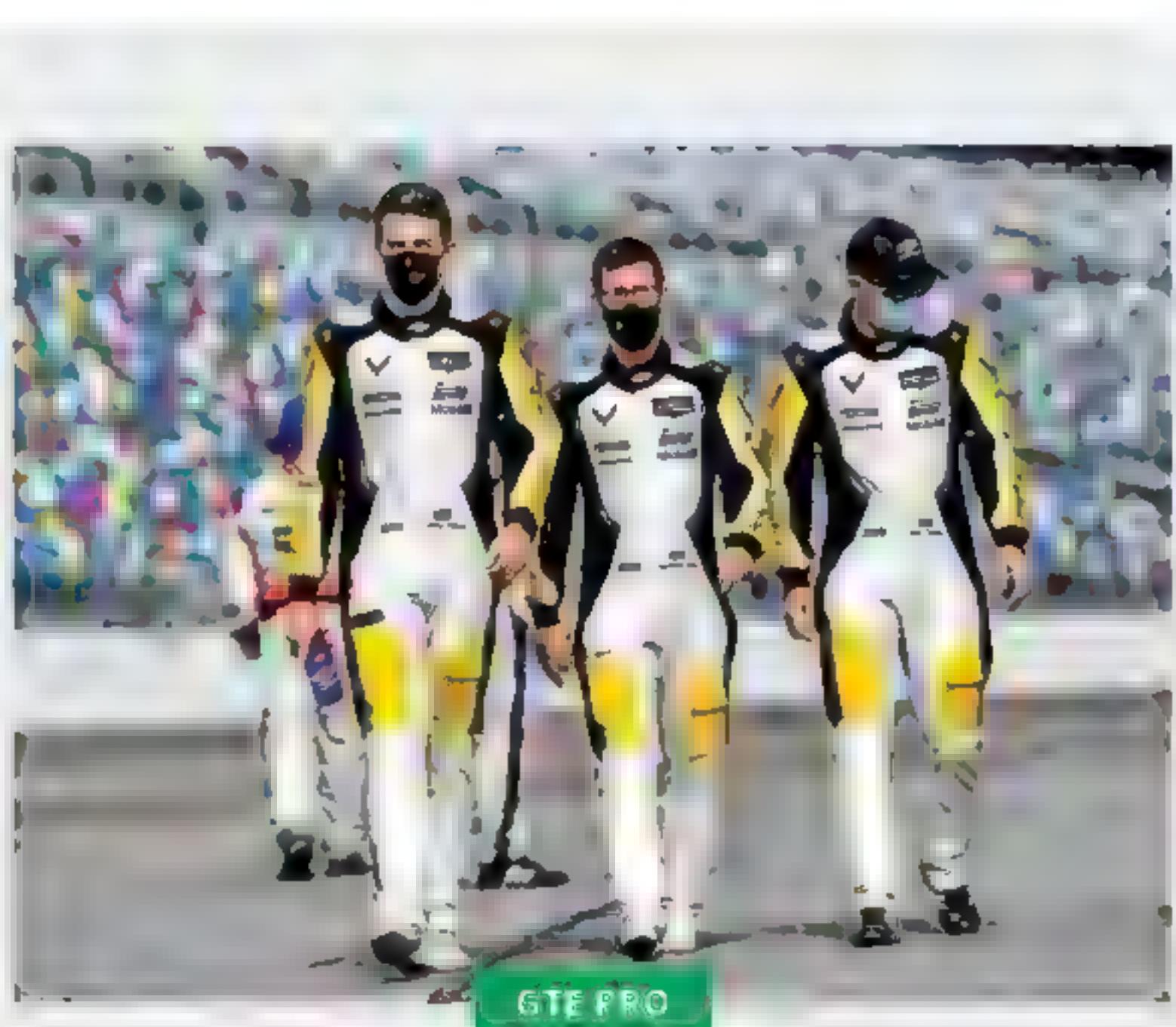
Even if the GTE Pro class at Le Mans is no longer as deep as it once was – 16 of the 17 GTE Pro entries in 2019 were factory cars, including four Porsches, four Fords, plus a brace apiece of Ferraris, Corvettes, BMWs and Aston Martins – it will still be a stern test to become the first privateer since Risi Competizione in 2016 to reach the podium. For Chen, "the main aim is to finish".

"We aim to be on the lead lap and cross the finish line at the end," says Chen. "We certainly have strong drivers and the internal skills to do that. Having said that, anything is possible – and a podium finish is a realistic possibility."

"If at the end of the race we're on the podium, I think we all can be more than happy," adds Martin.

Should it achieve that feat, then Chen's stated aim of becoming Asia's greatest GT team will go a long way to being realised. ▶

GTE HUBAUTO RACING



DOLE / MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Winds of change blow at Corvette

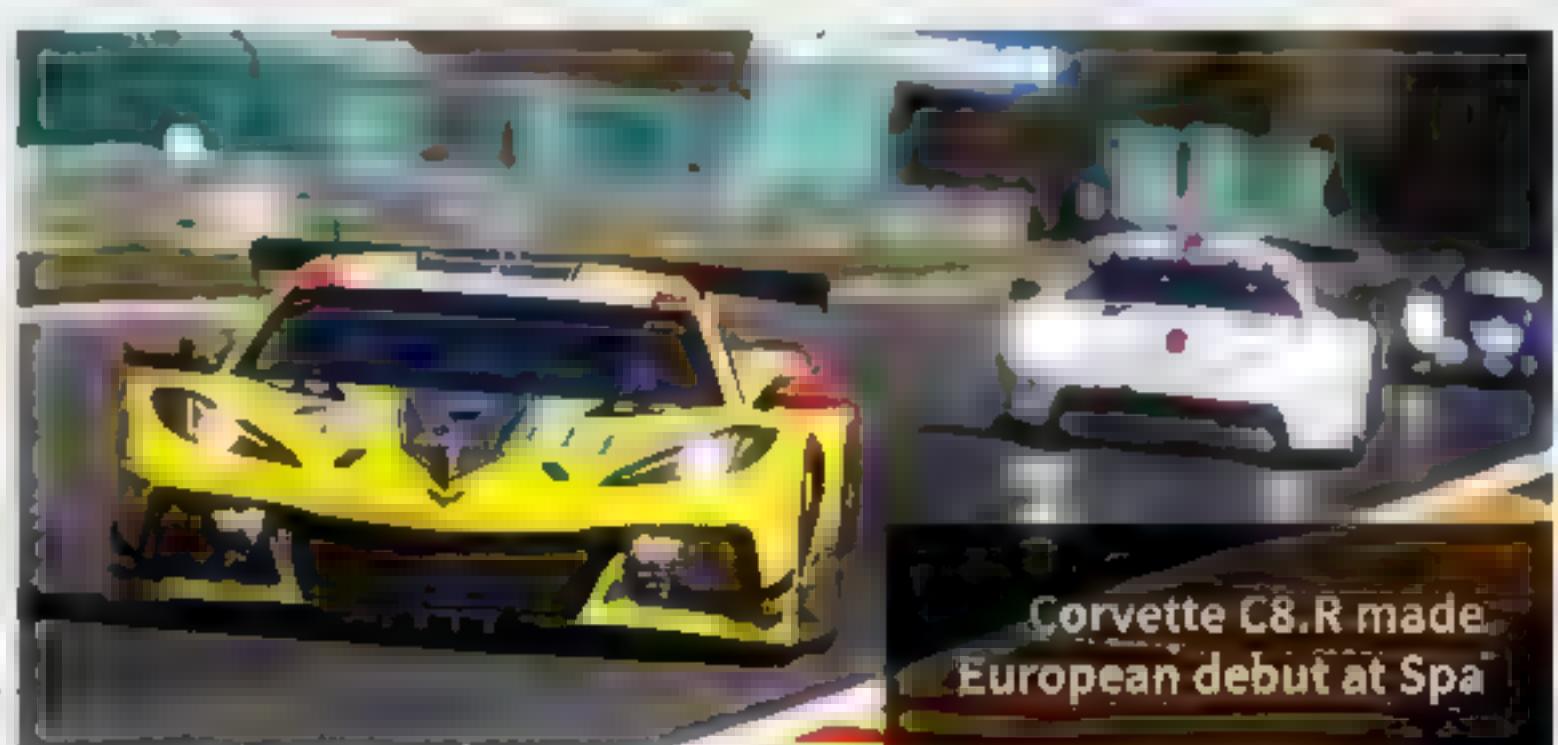
Le Mans returnee Corvette Racing has undergone plenty of changes since its last foray in 2019. The long-serving C7.R has been replaced with the mid-engined C8.R, which took fourth on its European debut at Spa in May in the World Endurance Championship, while on the driver front marque stalwarts Jan Magnussen and Oliver Gavin bade farewell.

But a strong British contingent remains in the squad courtesy of Corvette newcomers Nick Tandy and Alexander Sims, from Porsche and BMW respectively, who join Gavin's former partner Tommy Milner.

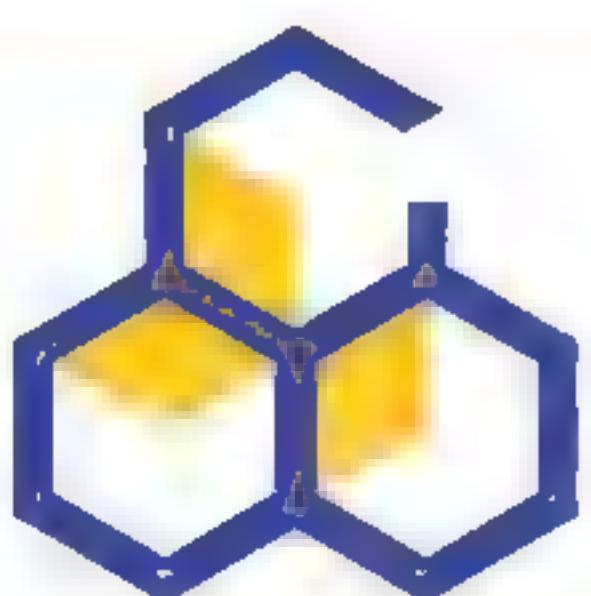
For Sims, back in the Corvette cockpit for the first time since Sebring, there will be plenty of reacclimatising to do after missing the test day to contest the Berlin Formula E finale. "I feel a large responsibility to get back up to speed quickly," he declares. "The challenge is to not push myself too hard too soon. If I'm not at least at a very similar pace to Nick and Tommy, I'll feel like I'm letting the side down."

Compared to the front-engined BMW M6 he raced at Le Mans in 2018, Sims was immediately impressed by the mid-engined Corvette, which he says is strong in "pretty much every phase of the corner". "When I first drove it, I struggled to find a fundamental weakness," he says. "It's an impressive machine. There's not a huge amount that needed to be optimised, it's more working out how best we work together."

Sims recognises the first challenge will be to beat the sister car of reigning IMSA GTLM champions Antonio Garcia and Jordan Taylor, plus Nicky Catsburg in his second year as the endurance-only third driver. He's also hopeful that the Spa appearance will have given the organisers a better idea of the car's ballpark Balance of Performance as the marque seeks a first Le Mans win since 2015. "If the BoP is not in the right window then you've kind of lost before you've started," he states. "If any manufacturer turns up to just do Le Mans, it's pretty difficult for the organisers, so hopefully that's given them the chance to make a fair assessment."



Corvette C8.R made European debut at Spa



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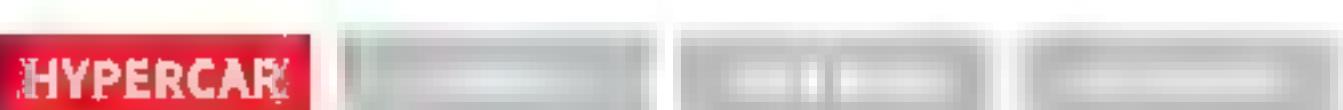


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HYPERCAR



Class of 2021 at a glance

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HYPERCAR

The new Hypercar class brings together Le Mans Hypercars, old LMP1 machinery and, from 2022 (though we won't see them until 2023), LMP2-based LMDh cars. The LMHs are heavier and have less downforce and total horsepower than their predecessors, and should be 10s per lap slower at Le Mans. All cars run on Michelin tyres.



LMP2

The secondary prototype division for privateers running off-the-shelf contenders built by one of four licensed constructors has been pegged back for 2021 so that the cars are slower than the Hypercars. Extra weight and less power from the one-make Gibson V8 should put them deep into the 3m30s. Goodyear is the tyre supplier.



GTE PRO GTE AM

The GTE class for road-based machinery is split into two divisions that more or less do what they say on the tin. Pro allows all-professional line-ups, while each Am crew can only include one pro and must have a Bronze-rated driver according to the FIA categorisation. All cars run on Michelin tyres.



TOYOTA GAZOO RACING Toyota GR010 HYBRID

7 MIKE CONWAY KAMUI KOBAYASHI JOSE MARIA LOPEZ

8 SEBASTIEN BUEMI KAZUKI NAKAJIMA BRENDON HARTLEY

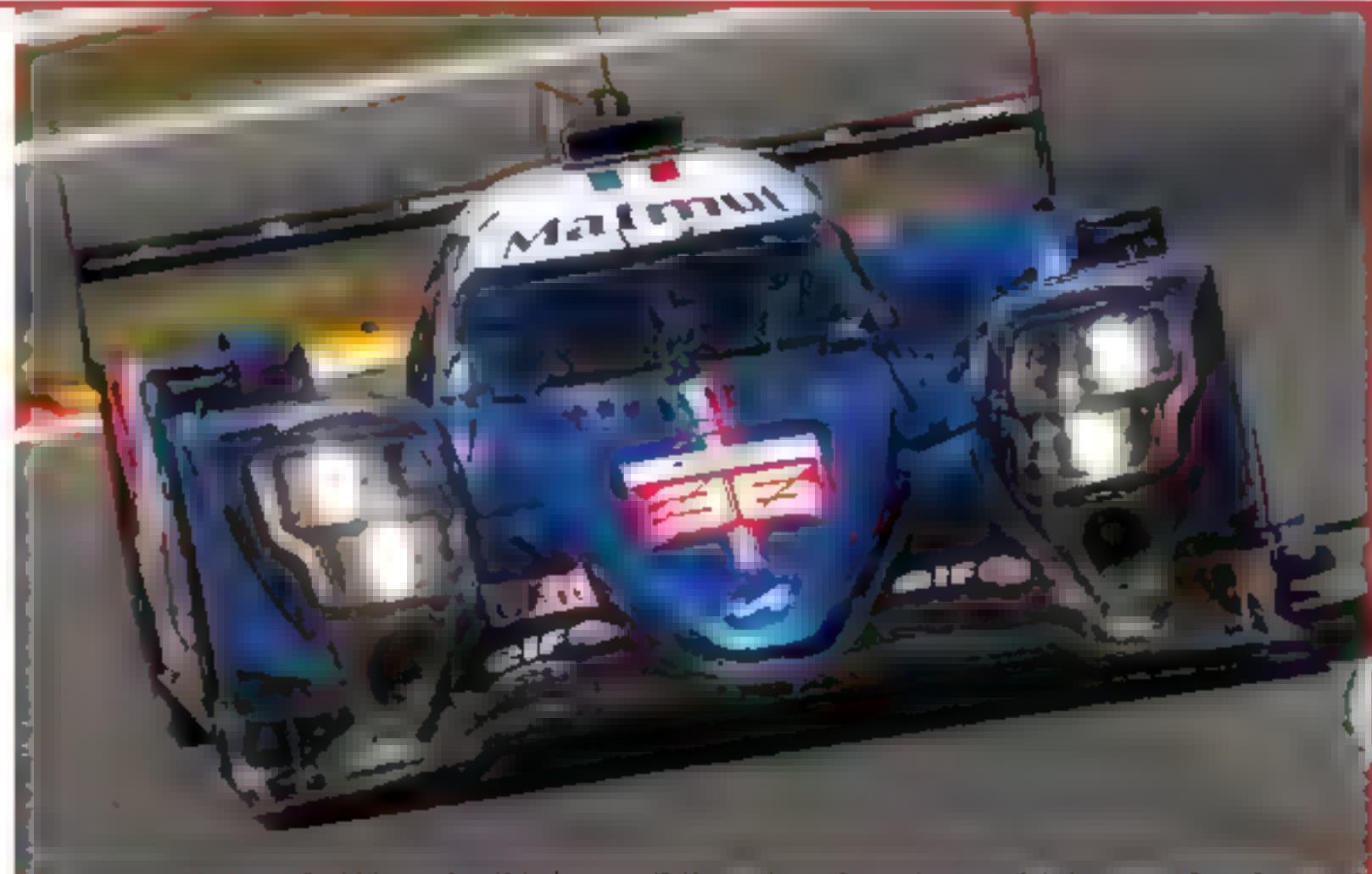
Toyota continues in the WEC for a ninth consecutive season — and 10th straight at Le Mans — with an all-new LMH to replace the successful TS050 LMP1. The driver line-ups are unchanged from last year's WEC campaign. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Toyota has to be the pre-event favourite as it bids for a fourth Le Mans win in a row after claiming victory with its new GR010 in the three WEC races so far.



ALPINE ELF MATMUT (Signatech) Alpine-Gibson A480

36 NICOLAS LAPIERRE ANDRE NEGRAO MATTHIEU VAXIVIERE

Alpine and Signatech step up to the big time, after multiple successes in LMP2, with a 'grandfathered' ORECA LMP1 design. Lapierre has returned to the team with which he won two WEC titles to race alongside team regular Negrao and newcomer Vaxiviere, twice a Le Mans podium finisher in P2. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** The A480 is a proven car that shouldn't be much slower than the Toyotas. The big question mark concerns its fuel range.

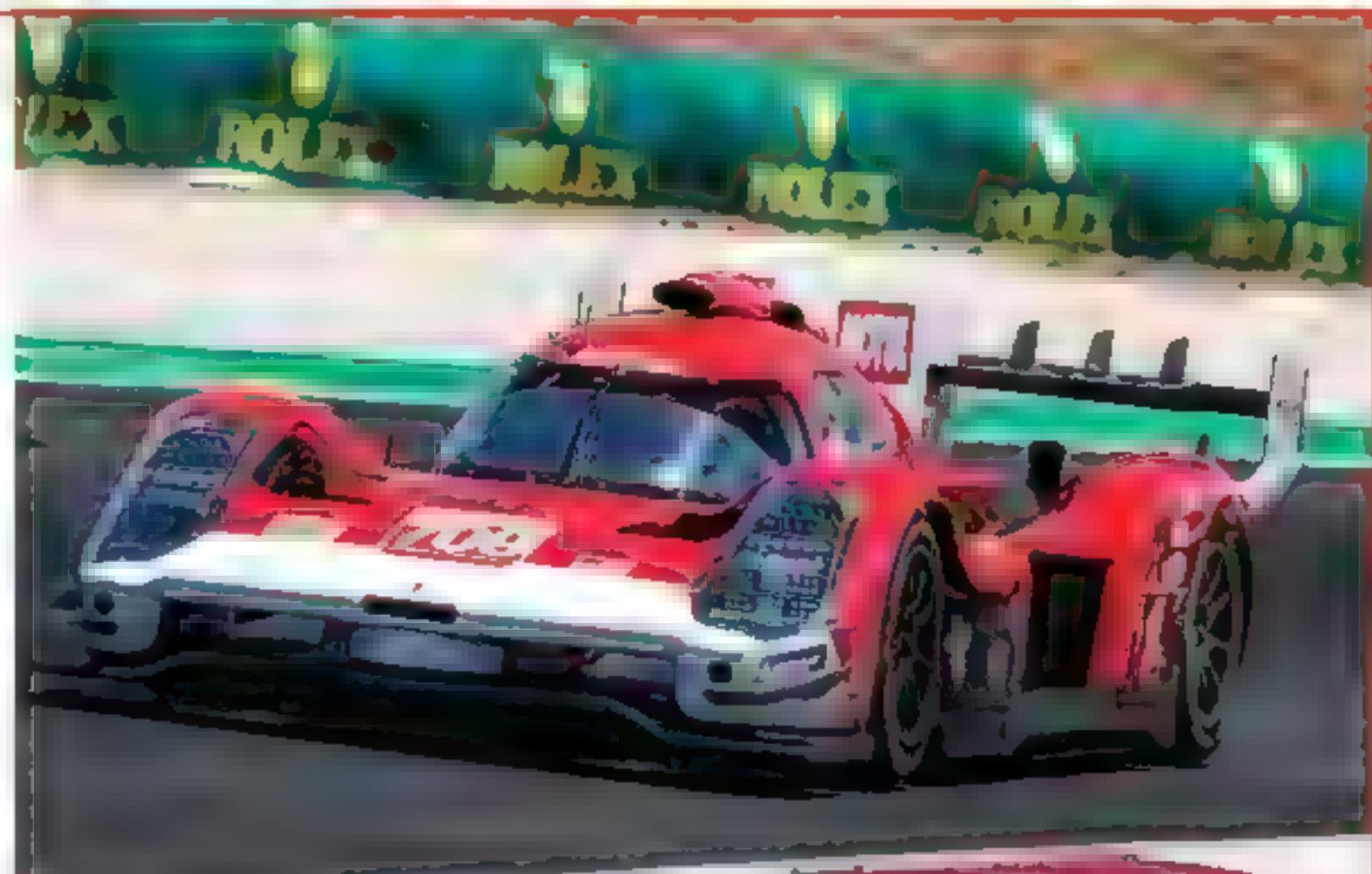


GLICKENHAUS RACING Glickenhaus-Pipo 007 LMH

708 PIPO DERANI OLIVIER PLA FRANCK MAILLEUX

709 RYAN BRISCOE RICHARD WESTBROOK ROMAIN DUMAS

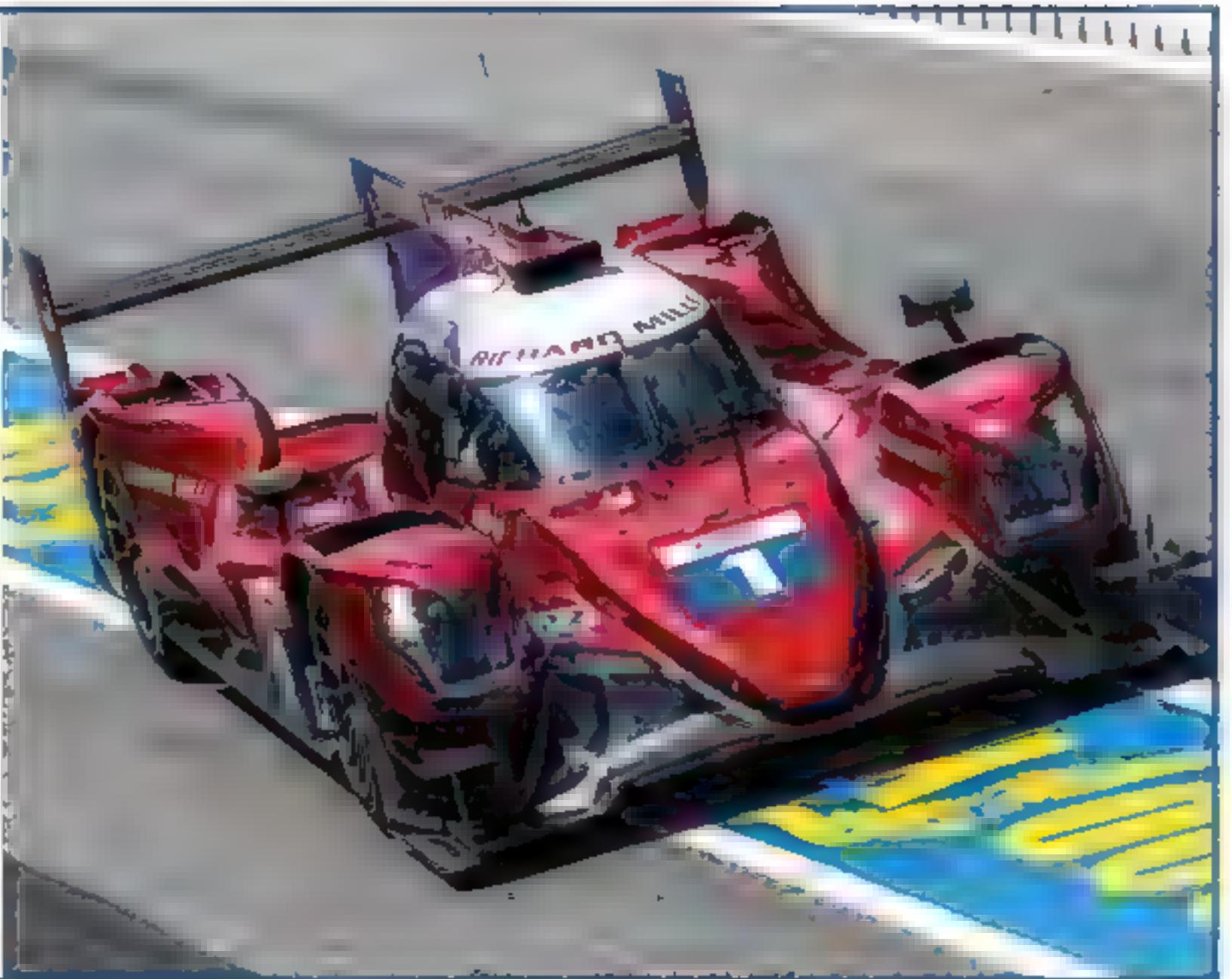
The American marque with a technical base in Italy has stepped up to the pinnacle of endurance racing after years racing at the Nurburgring 24 Hours. A measure of its ambition for its new LMH is provided by a driver line-up aboard its pair that includes two-time Le Mans winner Dumas and three-time Sebring victor Derani. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** WEC appearances suggest that Glickenhaus will not disgrace itself.



RICHARD MILLE (Signatech) ORECA-Gibson 07**1**TATIANA CALDERON
SOPHIA FLORSCH
BEITSKE VISSER

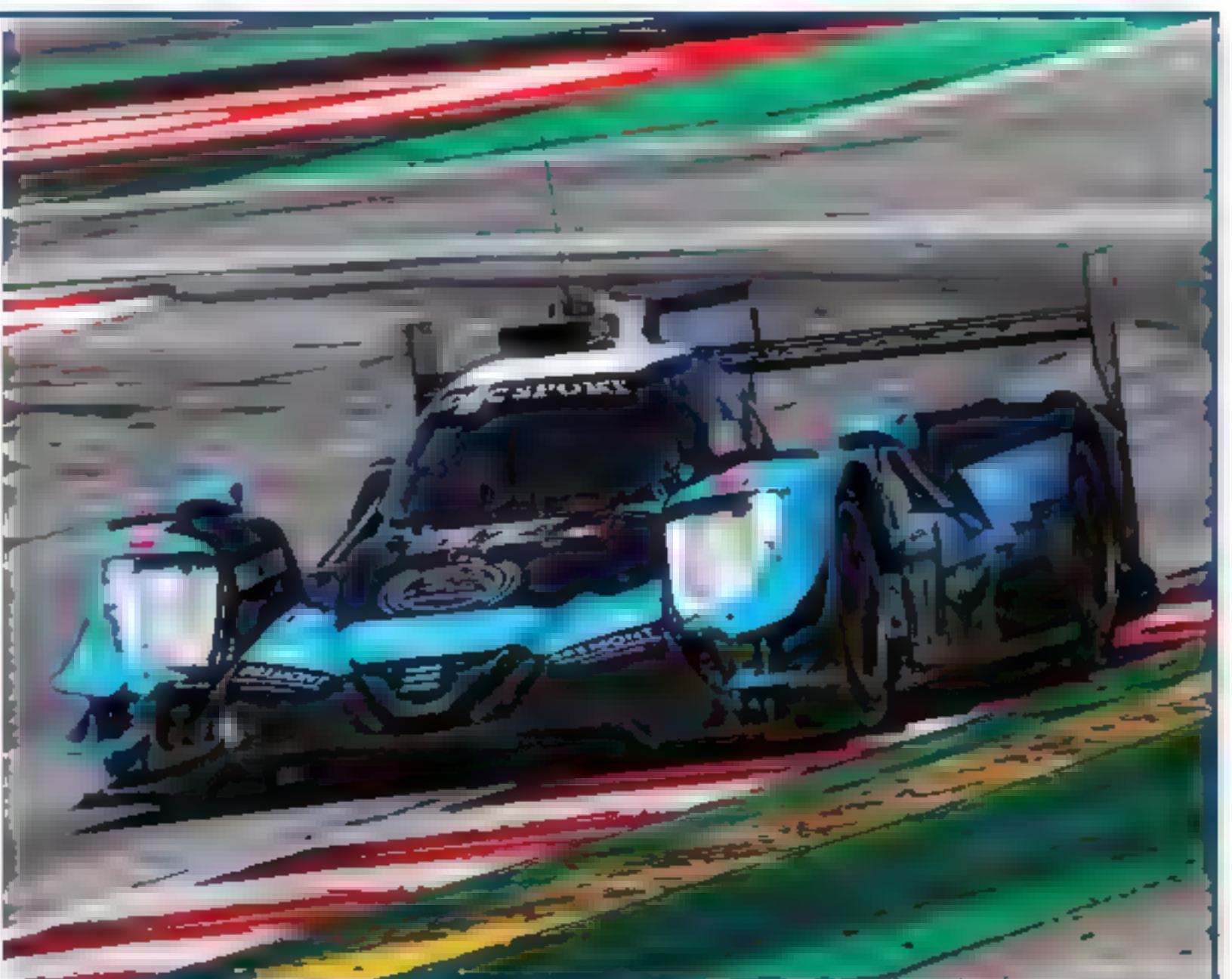
Watchmaker Richard Mille, who is also president of the FIA's Endurance Commission, is backing an all-female P2 programme for a second year in a row as part of the FIA's Women in Motorsport initiative. Signatech, three times a P2 class winner at Le Mans, runs the car, this season in the WEC rather than the ELMS. Last year's trio of Calderon, Florsch and Visser again make up the driver line-up.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Uninspired WEC form suggests an improvement on last year's ninth place could be a struggle.

**IDEC SPORT ORECA-Gibson 07****17**RYAN DALZIEL
KYLE TILLEY
DWIGHT MERRIMAN **48**PATRICK PILET
PAUL-LOUP CHATIN
PAUL LAFARGUE

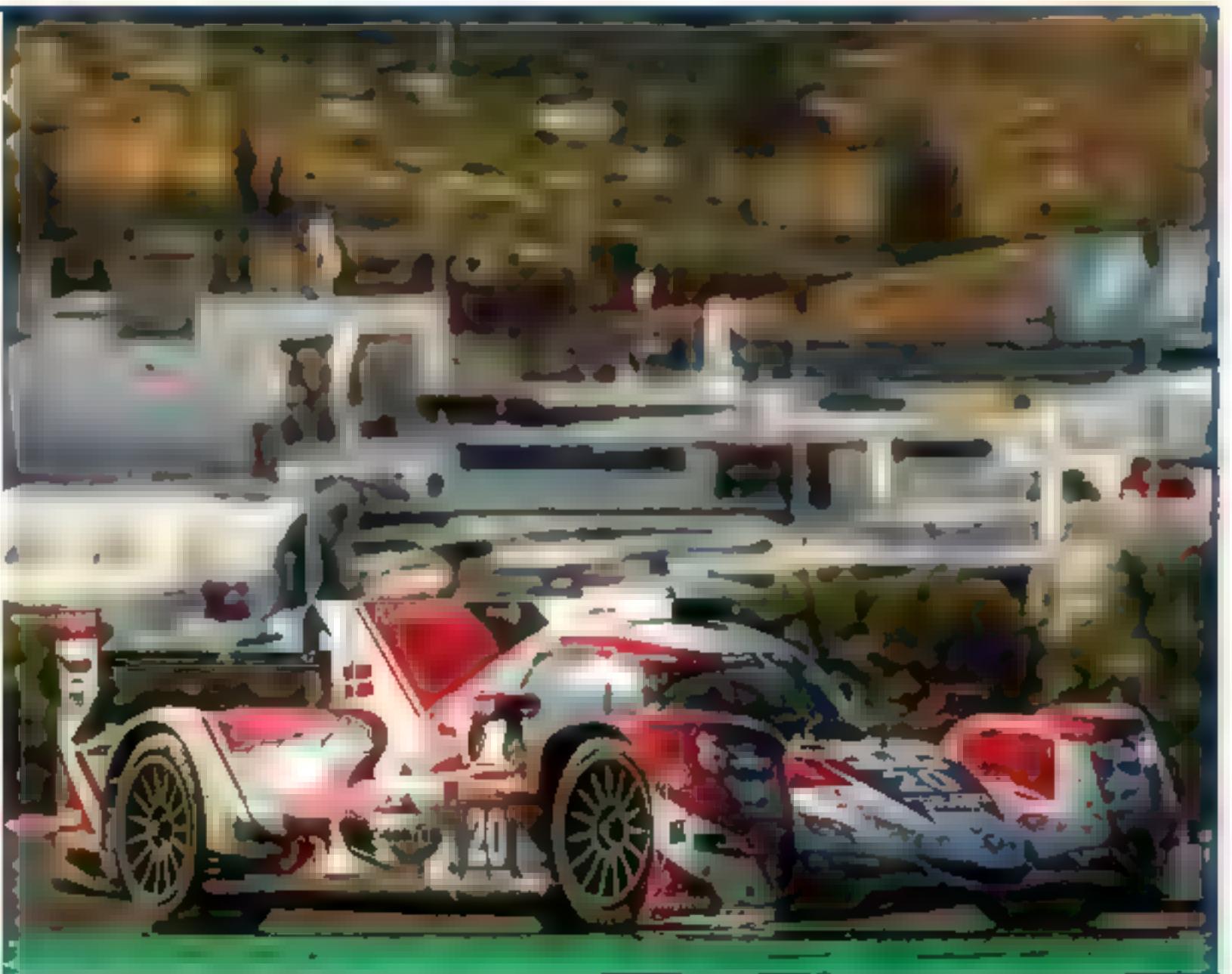
The French IDEC team again fields two ORECAAs at Le Mans alongside its ELMS campaign. Porsche factory driver Pilet, who joined the team as a late substitute ahead of the 24 Hours last year, has come into the full-season line-up alongside Chatin and Lafargue, while Dalziel, Tilley and Merriman are dovetailing their European programme with a P2 assault in the IMSA SportsCar Championship.

AUTOSPORT SAYS In the ELMS this year, the team has yet to replicate the form that took it to class pole at Le Mans in 2018.

**HIGH CLASS RACING ORECA-Gibson 07****20**RICKY TAYLOR
MARCO SORENSEN
DENNIS ANDERSEN **49**JAN MAGNUSEN
KEVIN MAGNUSEN
ANDERS FJORDBACH

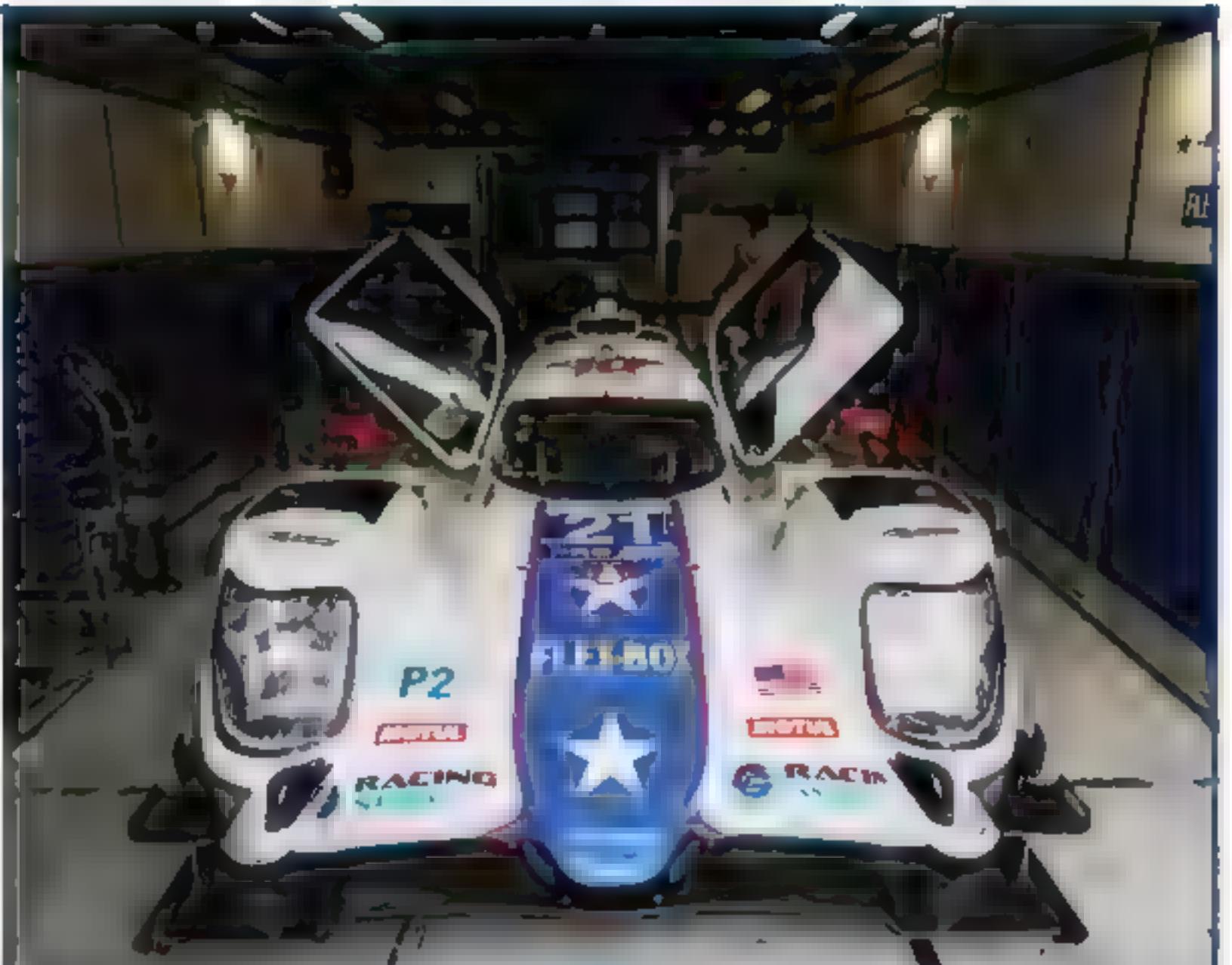
The Danish entrant hit the headlines earlier this year when it paired ex-F1 racer Kevin Magnussen alongside his father Jan in its additional entry for Le Mans. Magnussen Sr has moved over from the team's regular WEC entry along with Fjordbach, while the team has brought in Aston Martin factory driver Sorensen and reigning IMSA champion Taylor to take their places in the #20 car.

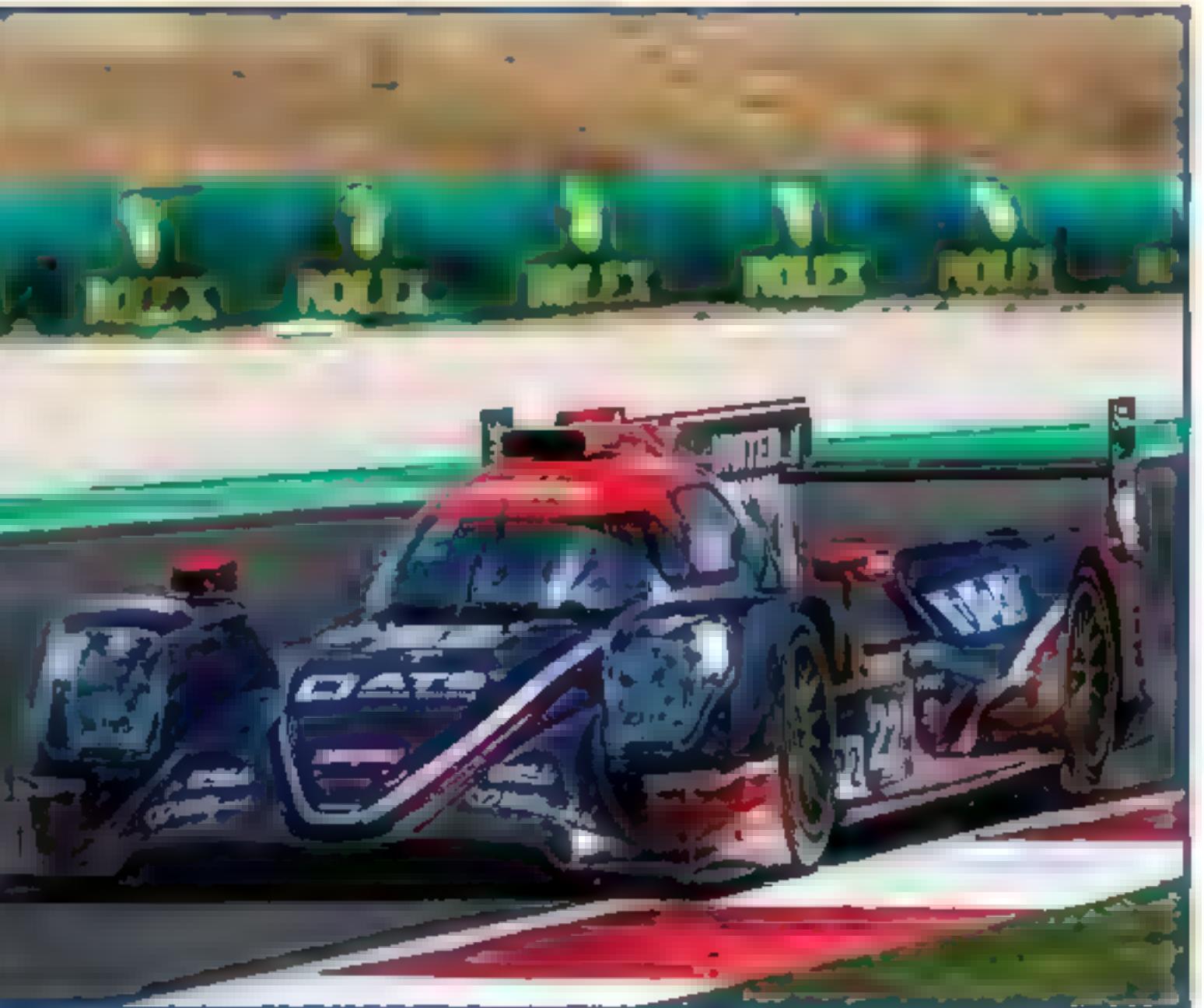
AUTOSPORT SAYS #20 has a line-up to challenge in the Pro-Am division, while #49 must have the potential to at least get close to the established class frontrunners.

**DRAGONSPEED USA ORECA-Gibson 07****21**JUAN PABLO MONToya
BEN HANLEY
HENRIK HEDMAN

The US entrant, now operating out of premises on the doorstep of the Barcelona circuit rather than its previous base over in France not far from Paul Ricard, is down to one car for what will be its fifth Le Mans participation. F1 winner Montoya is now a full-timer in the WEC, after coming late to the party ahead of Le Mans last year, alongside Hanley and team patron Hedman.

AUTOSPORT SAYS DragonSpeed must be a good bet to continue its unbroken sequence of Pro-Am podiums in the WEC this season.





UNITED AUTOSPORTS ORECA-Gibson 07

22 FILIPE ALBUQUERQUE
PHIL HANSON
FABIO SCHERER

23 PAUL DI RESTA
ALEX LYNN
WAYNE BOYD

32 NICO JAMIN
JONATHAN ABERDEIN
MANUEL MALDONADO

The reigning Le Mans and WEC P2 title winner expands from two to three cars. Scherer has come into the WEC line-up as the silver-rated driver alongside 2019-20 champions Albuquerque and Hanson after the latter was upgraded to gold. That left no room for di Resta, but United has put together a 'superteam' for Le Mans, with the Scot and Lynn alongside debutant Boyd. The final car is made up of regulars from its ELMS squad.

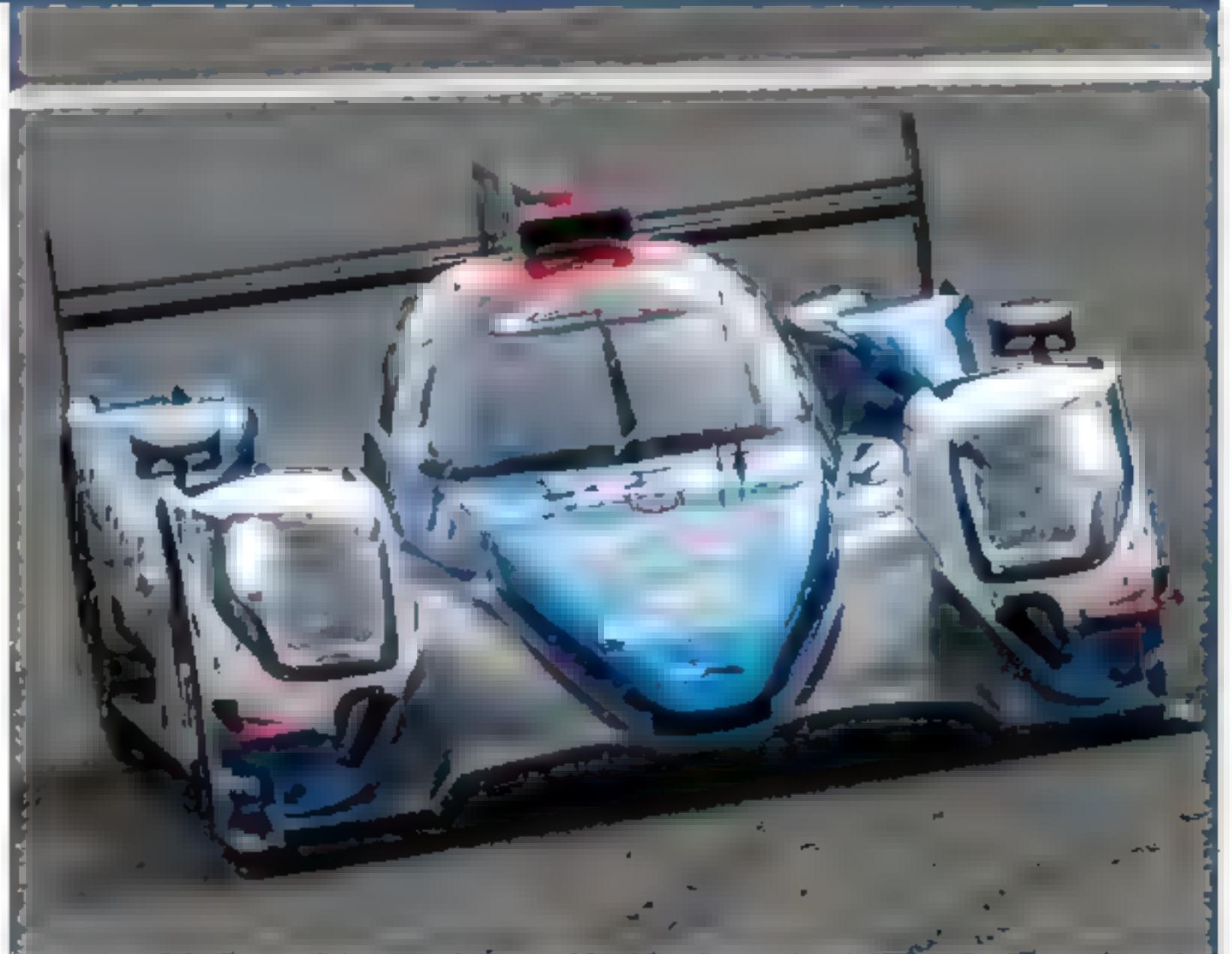
AUTOSPORT SAYS With three strong cars, United must be the pre-event favourite.

PR1 MATHIASSEN MOTORSPORTS ORECA-Gibson 07

24 GABRIEL AUBRY
SIMON TRUMMER
PATRICK KELLY

This established and successful American sportscar team makes its Le Mans debut after Kelly gained one of the discretionary Le Mans entries awarded by IMSA for his victory in the P2 class of the North American series with PR1 last year. The Californian operation has linked up with Panis Racing to mastermind its Pro-Am entry for Kelly and seasoned P2 hands Aubry and Trummer, who also joined him for a dry run at Spa.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Much will depend on Kelly's pace over his mandatory six hours.



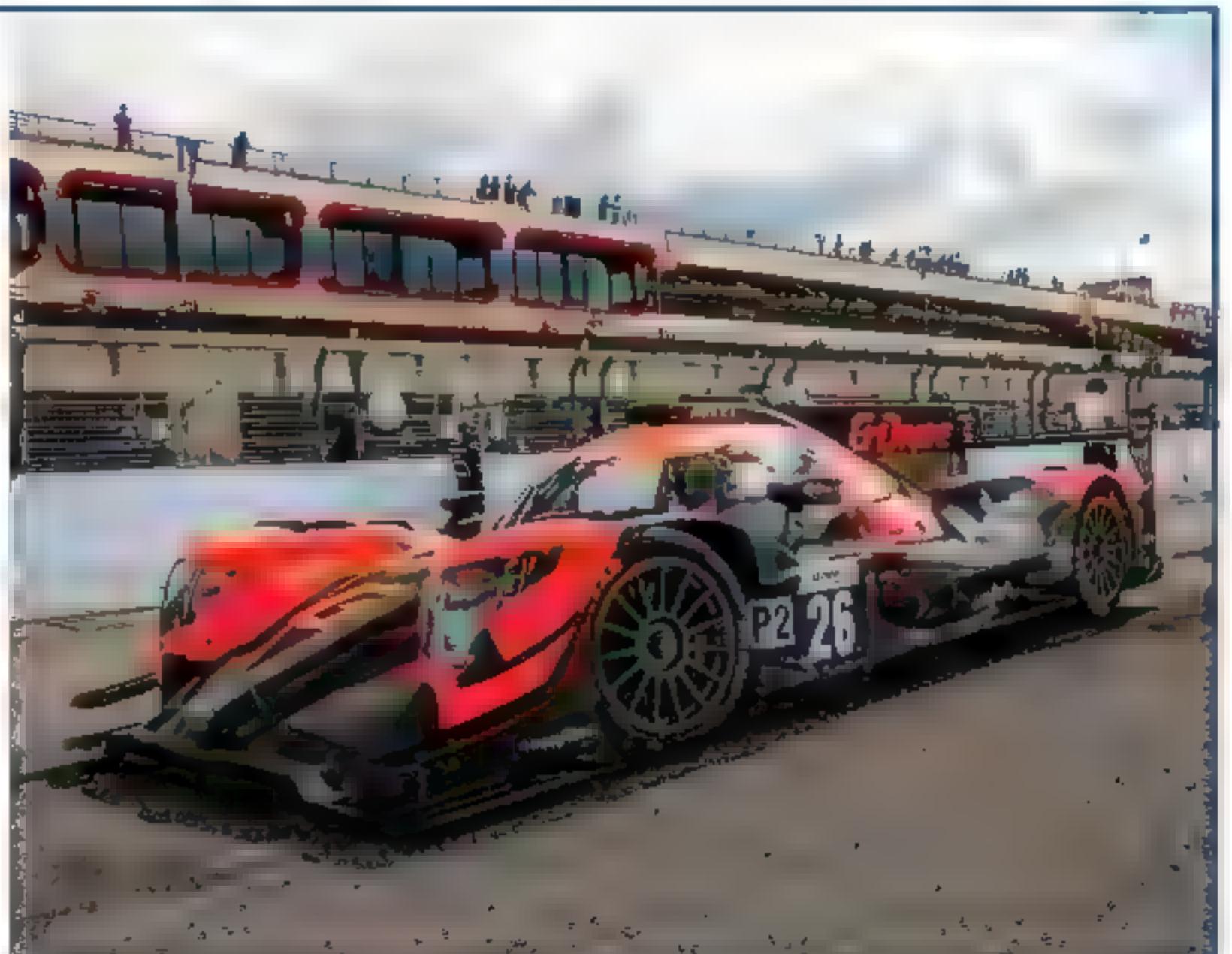
G-DRIVE RACING (Algarve Pro) ORECA-Gibson 07

25 ROBERTO MERHI
RUI ANDRADE
JOHN FALB

26 NYCK DE VRIES
ROMAN RUSINOV
FRANCO COLAPINTO

A long-time sportscar entrant now racing under the Russian Automobile Federation's flag makes its second Le Mans assault with the Anglo-Portuguese Algarve Pro squad. Super-silver Colapinto has come in alongside de Vries and the boss, Rusinov, in the lead Aurus-badged ORECA. Ex-F1 driver Merhi is back racing P2 full-time in the ELMS with series regular Falb and Angolan sportscar debutant Andrade in Pro-Am.

AUTOSPORT SAYS ELMS form suggests both cars will be right up there in their respective sub-classes.



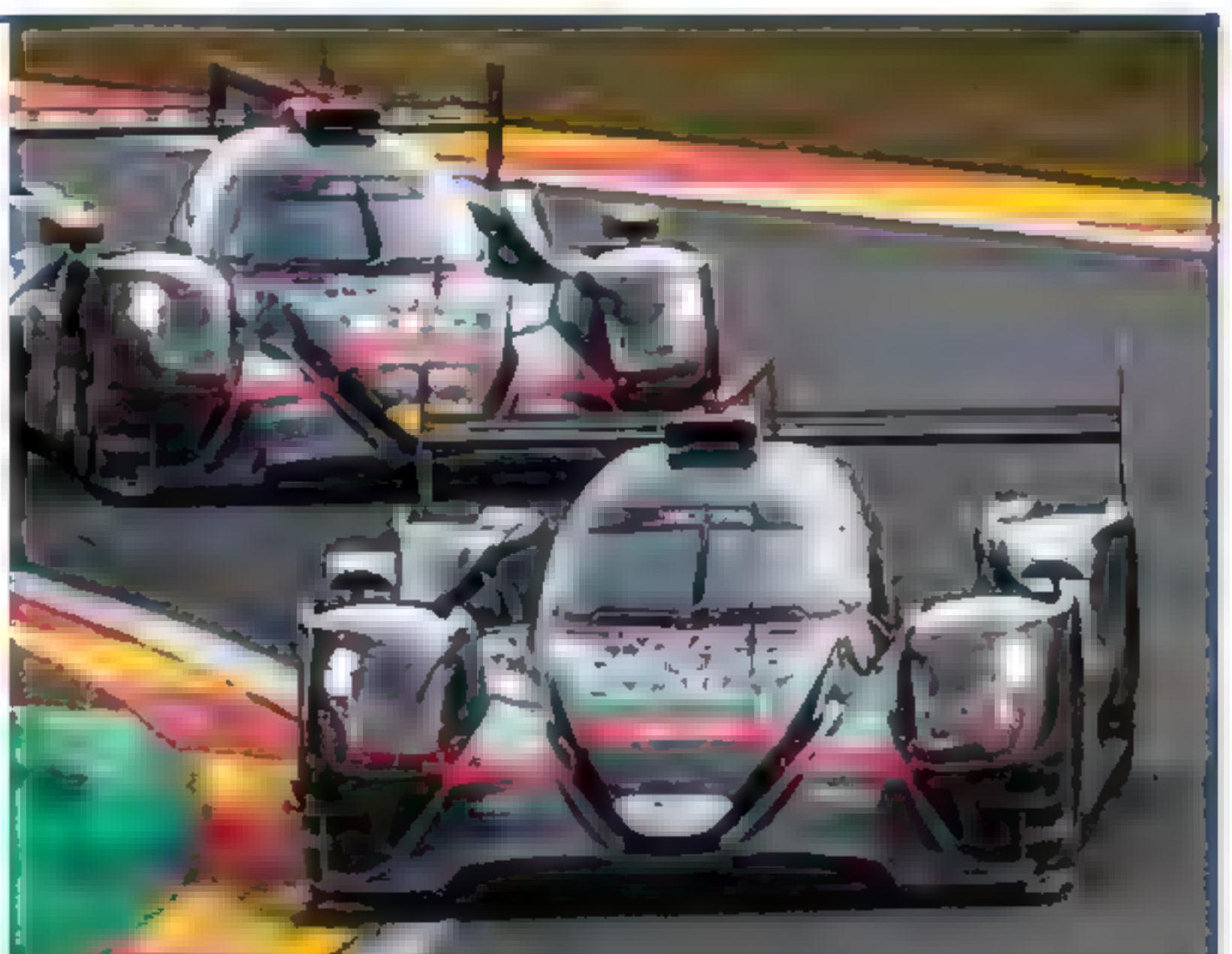
JOTA ORECA-Gibson 07

28 STOFFEL VANDOORNE
TOM BLOMQVIST
SEAN GELAEL

38 ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA
ANTHONY DAVIDSON
ROBERTO GONZALEZ

The British Jota team, a fixture at the sharp end of the P2 grid and a class winner at Le Mans in 2014 and 2017, fields two cars under its own name this year in the full WEC. Davidson, da Costa and Gonzalez, winners this season and last in the WEC, are joined by the super-team of ex-F1 racer Vandoorne, Blomqvist and silver-rated ex-F2 driver Gelael.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Expect a team that has failed to finish on the LMP2 Le Mans class podium just once in the past seven years to be right up there.

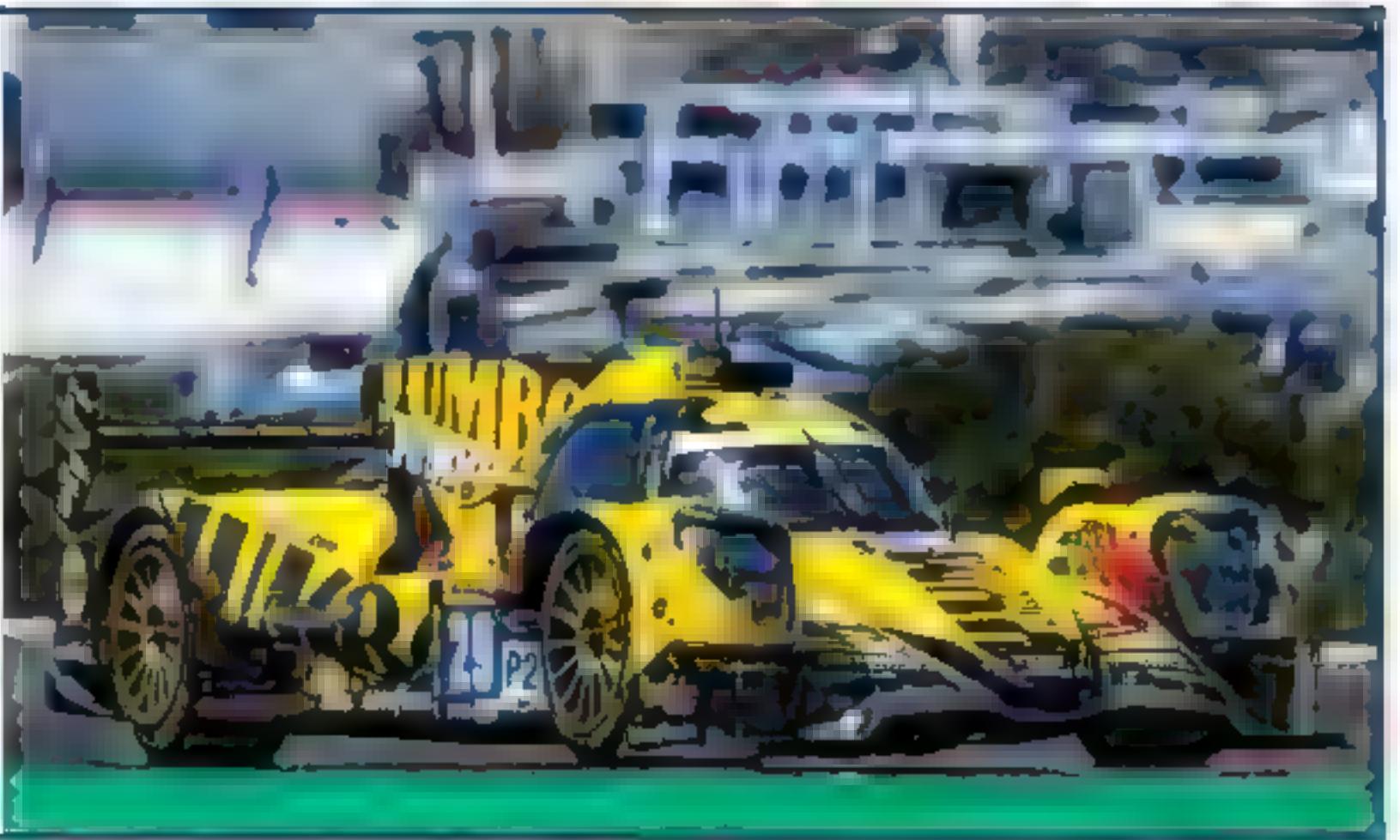




RACING TEAM NEDERLAND (TDS) ORECA-Gibson 07

29 GIEDO VAN DER
GARDE
JOB VAN UITERT
FR TS VAN EERD

RTN punched above its weight in the 2019-20 WEC, notching up a win and another three podiums with a line-up including bronze-rated van Eerd. So it's right up there in the new Pro-Am sub-class in the WEC. Van Uitert, ELMS runner-up last year, joins regulars van Eerd and van der Garde. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** RTN is a good bet for Pro-Am honours.

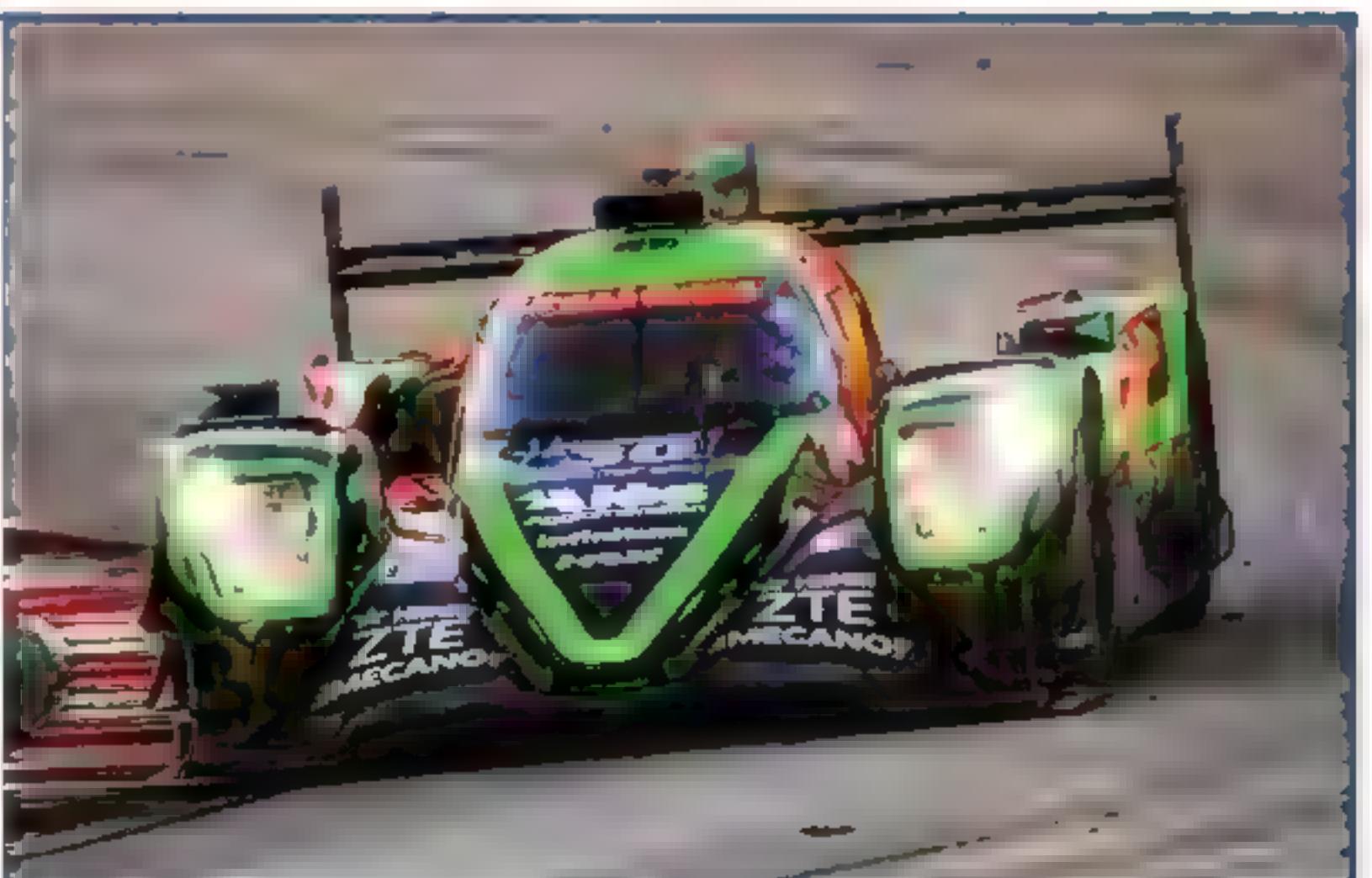


DUQUEINE TEAM ORECA-Gibson 07

30 TR STAN GOMMENDY
MEMO ROJAS
RENE BINDER

Duqueine makes its third Le Mans start with its best line-up yet. Gommendy is a former pole winner at Le Mans, Rojas a three-time winner of the Daytona 24 Hours and twice an ELMS champion, while silver-rated Binder's recent experience straddles GP2, Formula Renault 3.5 and IndyCars, as well as LMP2.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Top line-up has yet to live up to its potential in the ELMS.



TEAM WRT ORECA-Gibson 07

31 ROBIN FRIJNS
FERDINAND
HABSBURG
CHARLES MILESI

41 ROBERT KUBICA
LOUIS DELETRAZ
YIFEI YE

A team that has won everything in the GT3 arena with Audi – the Spa and Nurburgring 24-hour classics included – has expanded full-time into LMP2 with twin programmes in 2021. It is already a double winner in the ELMS with Kubica, Deletraz and Ye, and should have won the Monza WEC round with Frijns, Habsburg and Milesi.

AUTOSPORT SAYS WRT is learning about a new discipline fast and has the drivers to win.

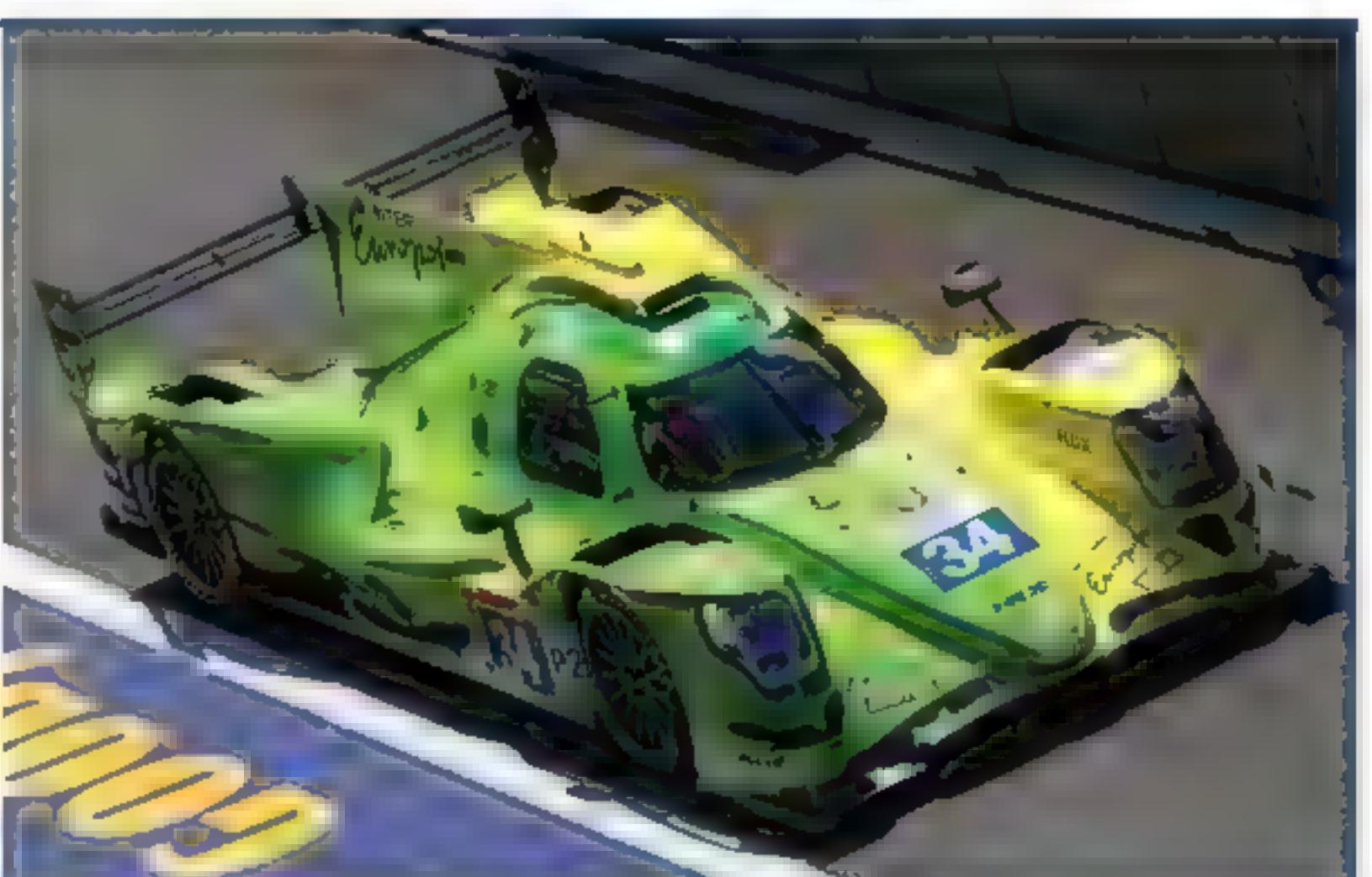


INTER EUROPOL COMPETITION ORECA-Gibson 07

34 RENGER VAN DER
ZANDE
ALEX BRUNEL
JAKUB SMIECHOWSKI

The Polish entrant has stepped up to the full WEC for this year with a campaign masterminded from new premises in its homeland rather than Germany. It's also taken a step up in terms of its driver line-up: two-time Daytona 24 Hours winner van der Zande and P2 stalwart Brundle have joined team regular Smiechowski.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Fourth place last time out at Monza suggests the team is on the up.

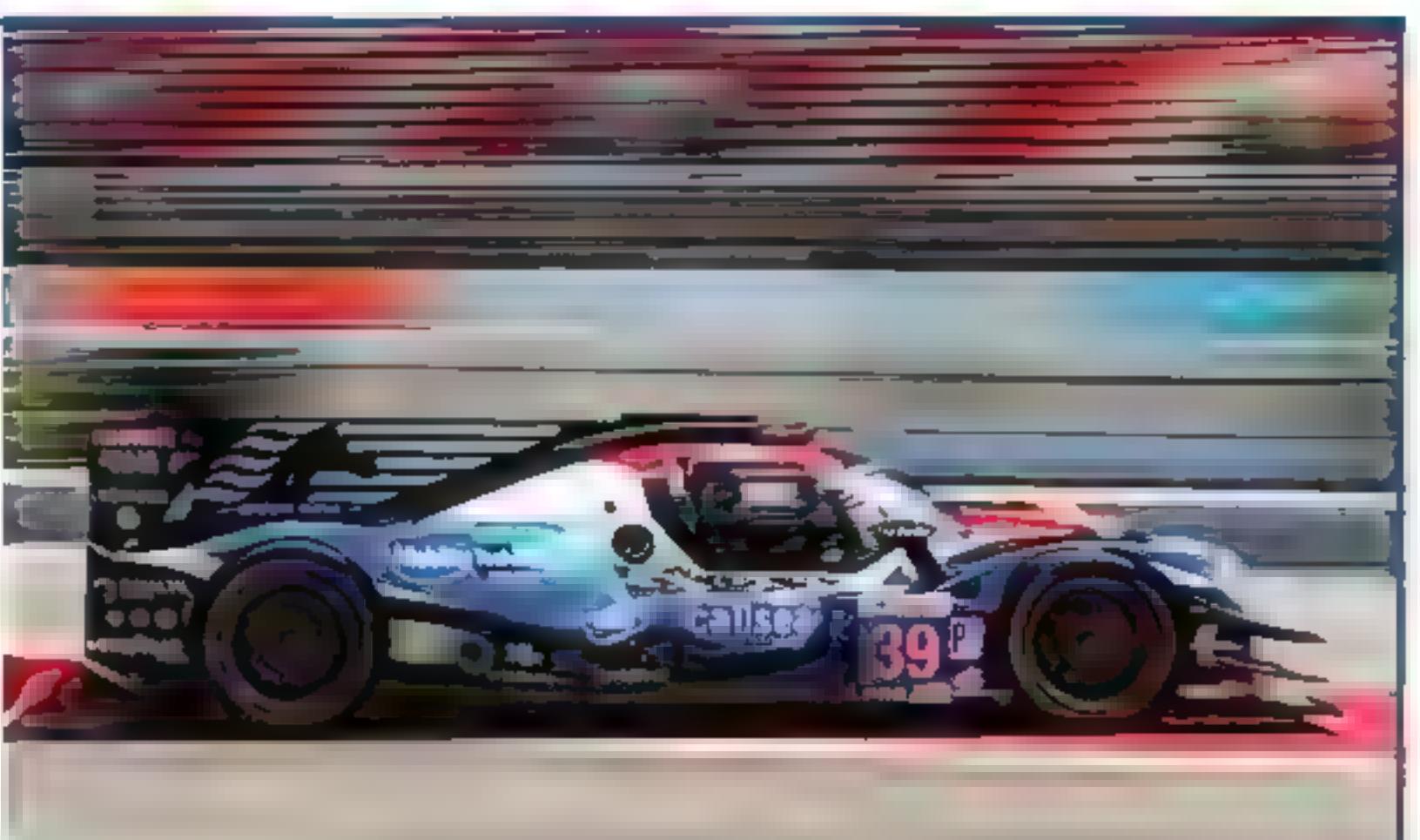


SO24-DIROB BY GRAFF ORECA-Gibson 07

39 VINCENT CAPILLAIRE
MAXIME ROBIN
ARNOLD ROBIN

Three drivers from the Le Mans locale team up at Graff with the backing of the SO24 organisation to help Sarthois compete in the 24 Hours. Capillaire is back for his eighth consecutive 24 Hours, while the Robin brothers have graduated to P2 in the ELMS this year from the LMP3 ranks.

AUTOSPORT SAYS It's more about the taking part than the winning for this crew.



ARC BRATISLAVA ORECA-Gibson 07

44 OLIVER WEBB MATEJ KONOPKA MIRO KONOPKA

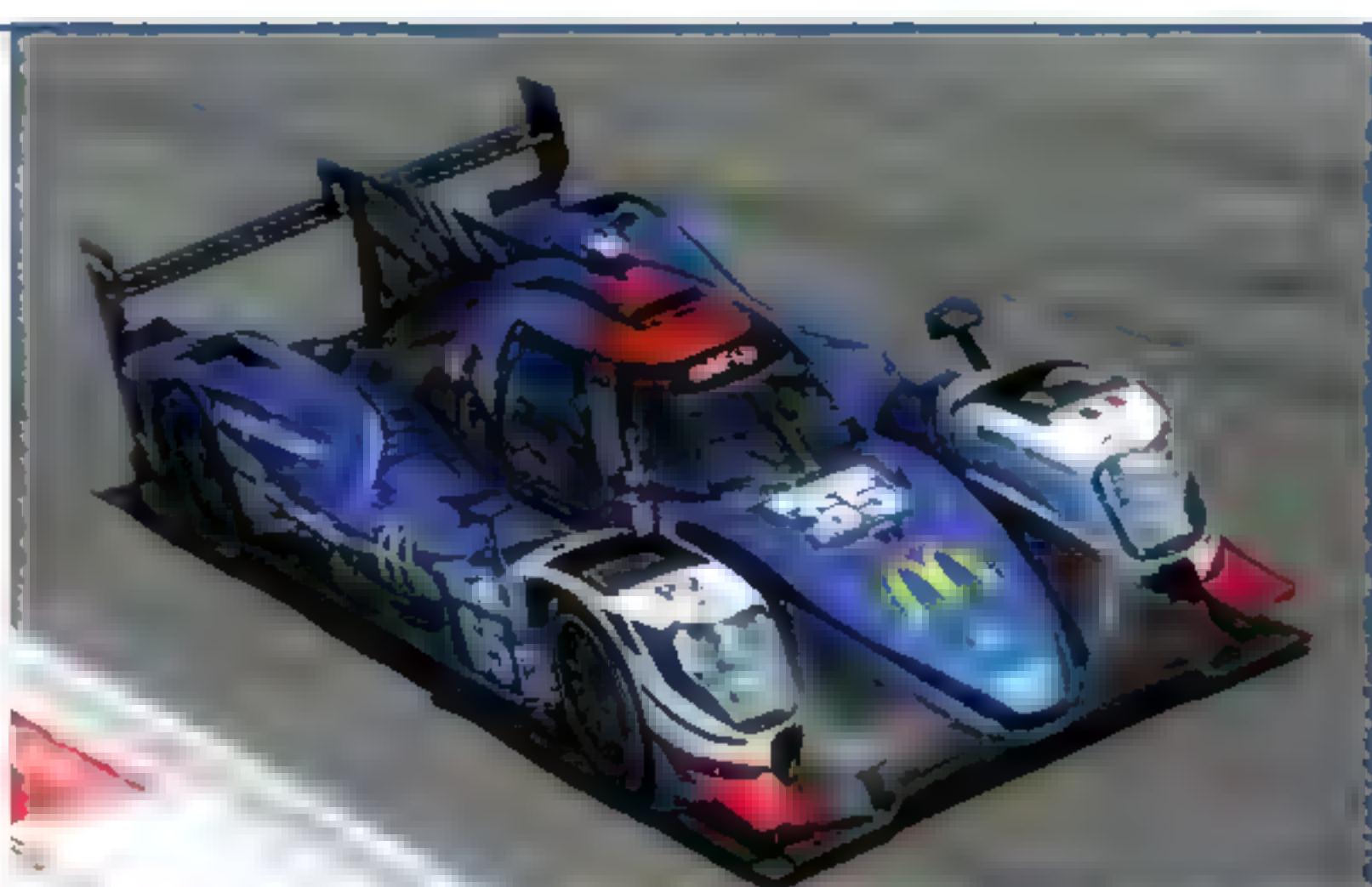
The well-travelled sportscar team from Slovakia is back at Le Mans for a second time after a year's absence. The team has upgraded to an ORECA from a Ligier (right) for this race. Sportscar pro Webb joins team boss Miro Konopka and son Matej, who made his WEC debut with the team at Monza. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** The new chassis should help the team move forward.



PANIS RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

65 WILL STEVENS JAMES ALLEN JULIEN CANAL

Monaco Grand Prix winner Olivier Panis's team and Tech 1 Racing, more or less one entity these days, are back at Le Mans this year with a strong line-up that has already tasted victory in the 2021 ELMS. Stevens is joined by Australian Allen and highly rated silver Canal, a three-times class champion in the WEC. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** A little team with big aspirations that should be right up there.



REALTEAM RACING (TDS) ORECA-Gibson 07

70 LOIC DUVAL NORMAN NATO ESTEBAN GARCIA

This TDS-run operation has graduated to P2 in the WEC after a race-winning season in the LMP3 class of the ELMS. Swiss Garcia has pulled the strong line-up of 2013 Le Mans winner Duval and ex-Rebellion LMP1 man Nato around him for a P2 Pro-Am assault that has so far yielded a win and two podiums. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Everything will depend on Garcia's performance on his Le Mans debut.



RACING TEAM INDIA EURASIA Ligier-Gibson JSP217

74 JAMES WINSLOW JOHN CORBETT TOM CLOET

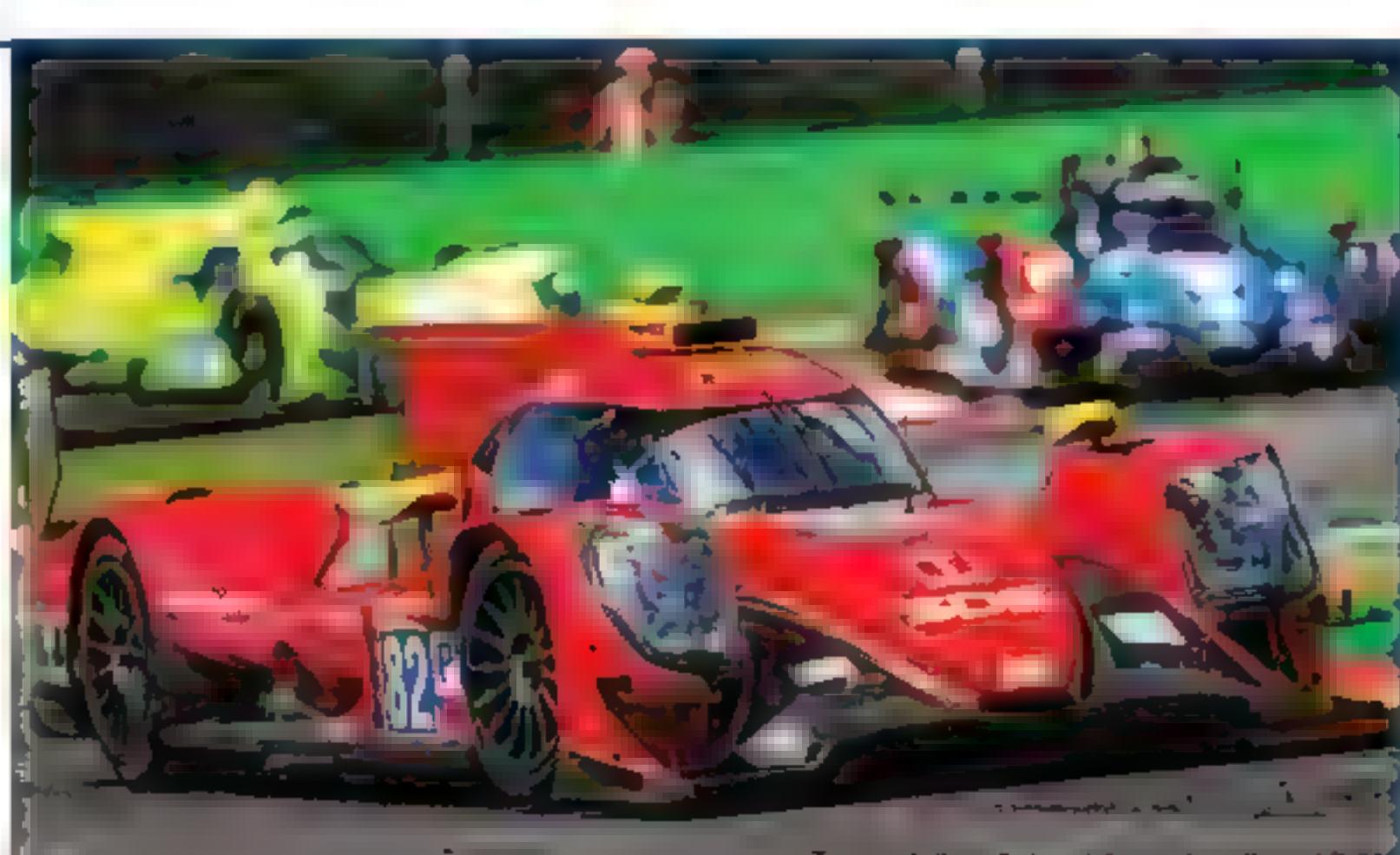
Plans for the Philippines-based Eurasia team to field an all-Indian line-up including ex-F1 driver Narain Karthikeyan unravelled due to COVID-related travel restrictions. Team boss Mark Goddard, a former British F3 regular, has assembled a new squad of Asian Le Mans Series regulars to drive the field's only Ligier. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Winslow needs his rookie team-mates to get up to speed to make a mark.



RISI COMPETIZIONE ORECA-Gibson 07

82 OLIVER JARVIS FELIPE NASR RYAN CULLEN

Risi, a class winner at Le Mans in 1998 with Ferrari's 333 SP but better known as a GT stalwart, returns to prototypes after an absence of 19 years. Run by former Jota team manager Gary Holland, the team fields the ORECA that Cullen raced last year with DragonSpeed and G-Drive/Algarve Pro. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** With Nasr, Jarvis and Cullen, Risi has the drivers to challenge.



AF CORSE Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

51	ALESSANDRO PIER GUIDI	ITALY
	JAMES CALADO	ENGLAND
	COME LEDOGAR	ITALY
52	DANIEL SERRA	BRAZIL
	M GUEL MOLINA	SPAIN
	DAVIDE RIGON	ITALY

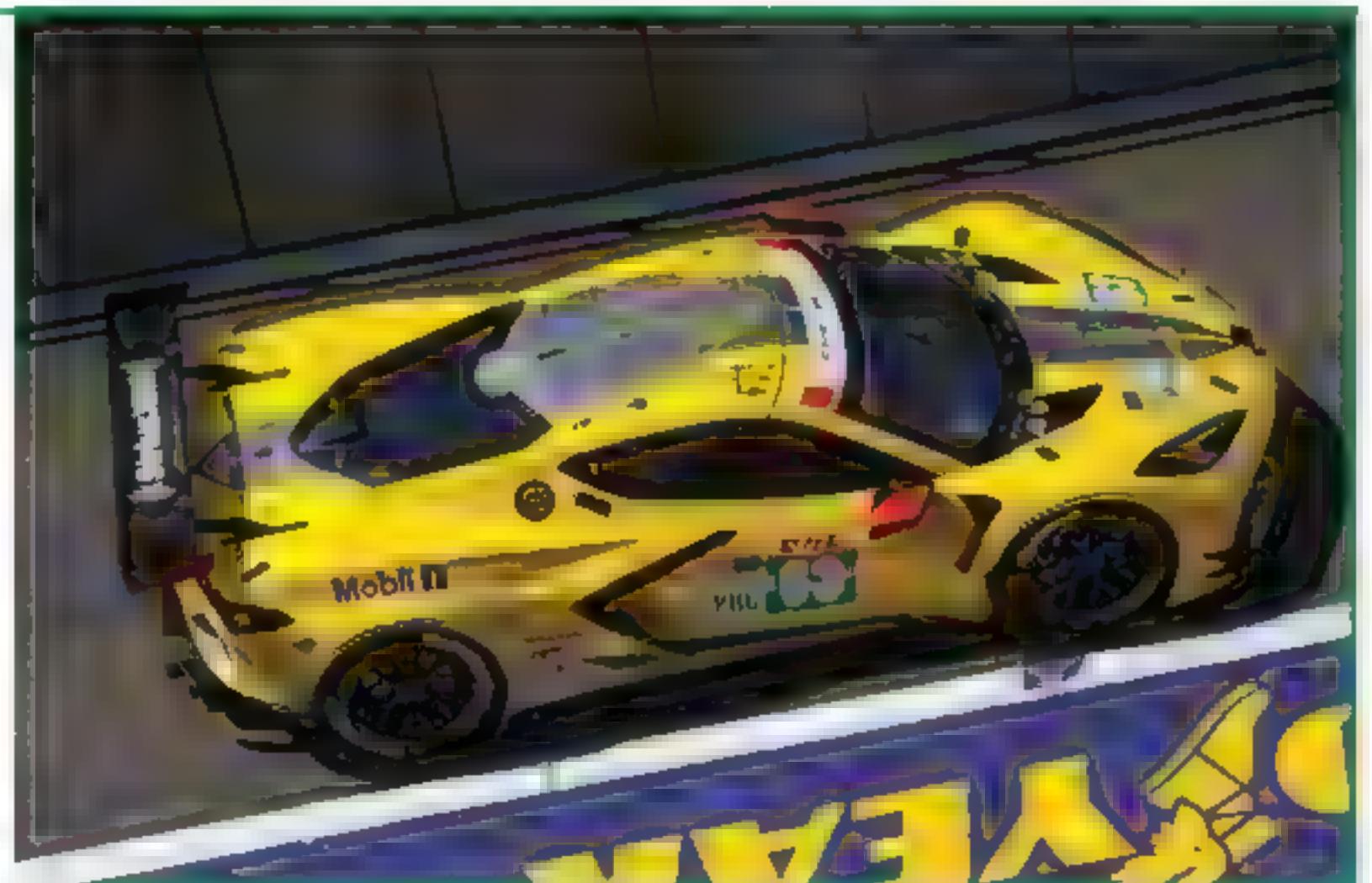
Ferrari maintains its presence in Pro with AF dating back to the rebirth of the WEC in 2012, though there's a new look to the driver line-up. Ledogar comes in for Le Mans alongside Calado and Pier Guidi. Serra is now Molina's regular partner in place of Rigon, who is the third driver. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Ferrari is usually a threat, but it's 2-1 to Porsche so far in the 2021 WEC.



CORVETTE RACING Chevrolet Corvette C8.R

63	ANTONIO GARCIA	SPAIN
	JORDAN TAYLOR	USA
	NICKY CATSBURG	USA
64	TOMMY MILNER	USA
	NICK TANDY	UK
	ALEXANDER SIMS	UK

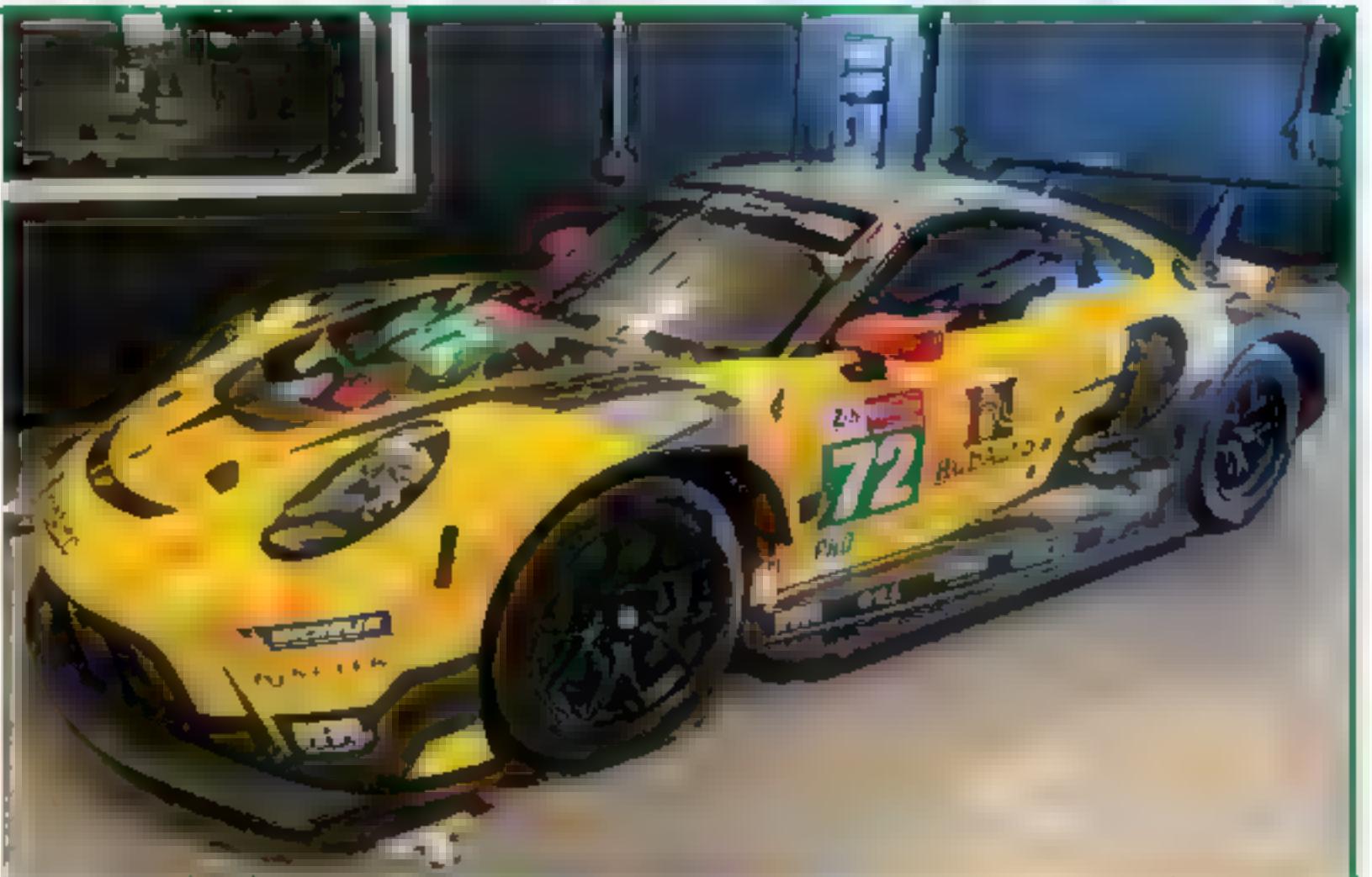
The mid-engined C8.R makes a belated Le Mans debut after Chevrolet was forced to break its unbroken run at Le Mans stretching back to 2000 because of COVID. Ex-Porsche driver Tandy has joined Milner in the regular North American line-up, while ex-BMW man Sims has joined as third driver. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** The C8.R has been designed to address the shortcomings of its predecessor at Le Mans. Expect a challenge.



HUBAUTO RACING Porsche 911 RSR

72	ALVARO PARENTE	PORTUGAL
	MAXIME MARTIN	FRANCE
	DR ES VANHOOR	FRANCE

This Taiwanese operation, a stalwart of GT racing in Asia, makes a second Le Mans appearance, but with a difference. It has moved up from GTE Am to the Pro class and switched from Ferrari to Porsche. The younger of the Vanhoor brothers is joined by Aston factory driver Martin and Parente. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Despite the strength of this line-up, it will be a big ask for HubAuto to challenge the factories.



WEATHERTECH (Proton) Porsche 911 RSR

79	EARL BAMBER	NEW ZEALAND
	LAURENS VANHOOR	FRANCE
	COOPER MACNEIL	USA

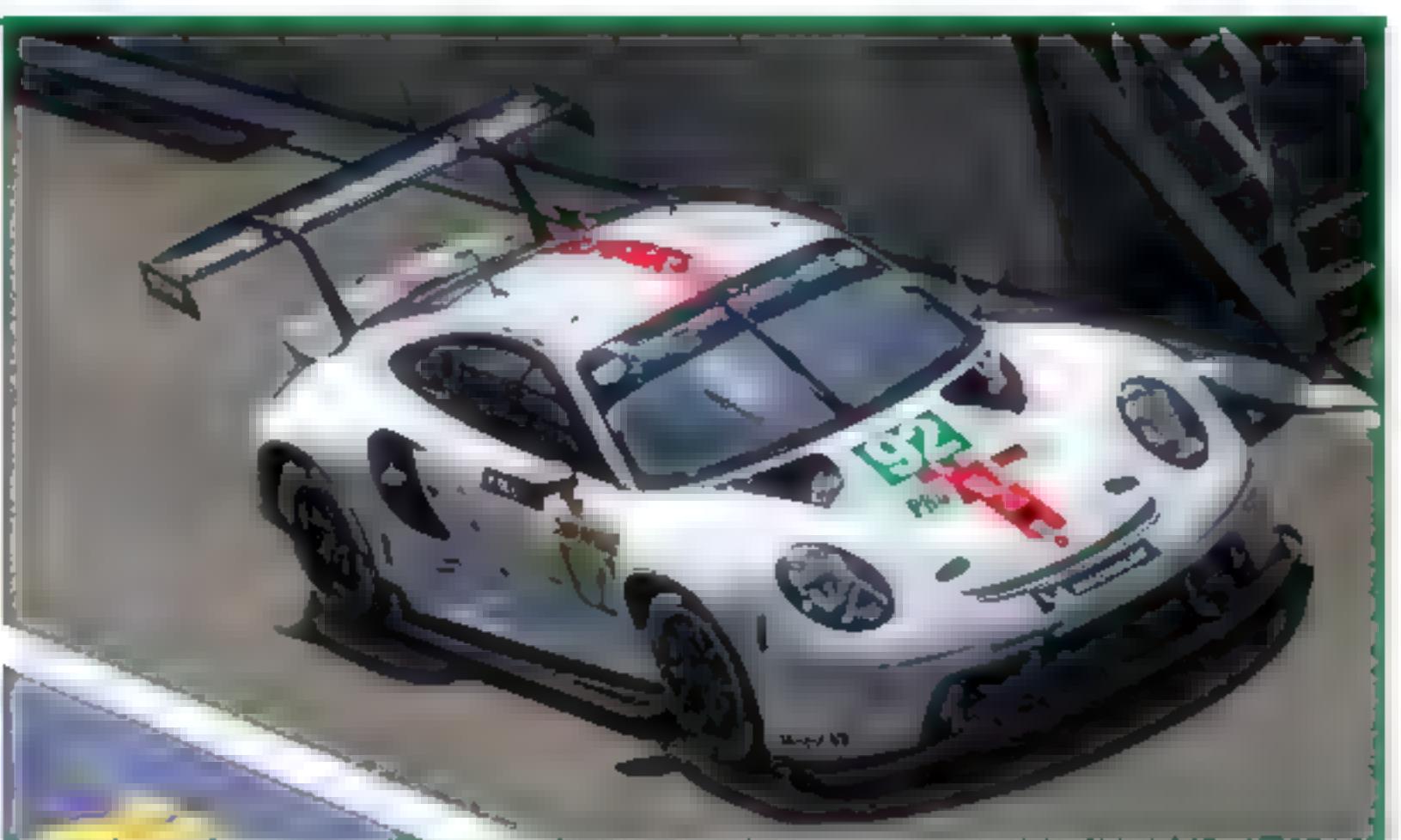
The team funded by the title sponsor of the IMSA series is back at Le Mans for a second year in a row, this time with a Porsche run by Proton rather than a Ferrari by Scuderia Corsa. MacNeil is joined full factory pilot Vanhoor and Bamber, a kind of pseudo-Porsche works driver these days. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** WeatherTech will need the kind of luck it got on the way to class victory at Sebring to pull off a repeat.

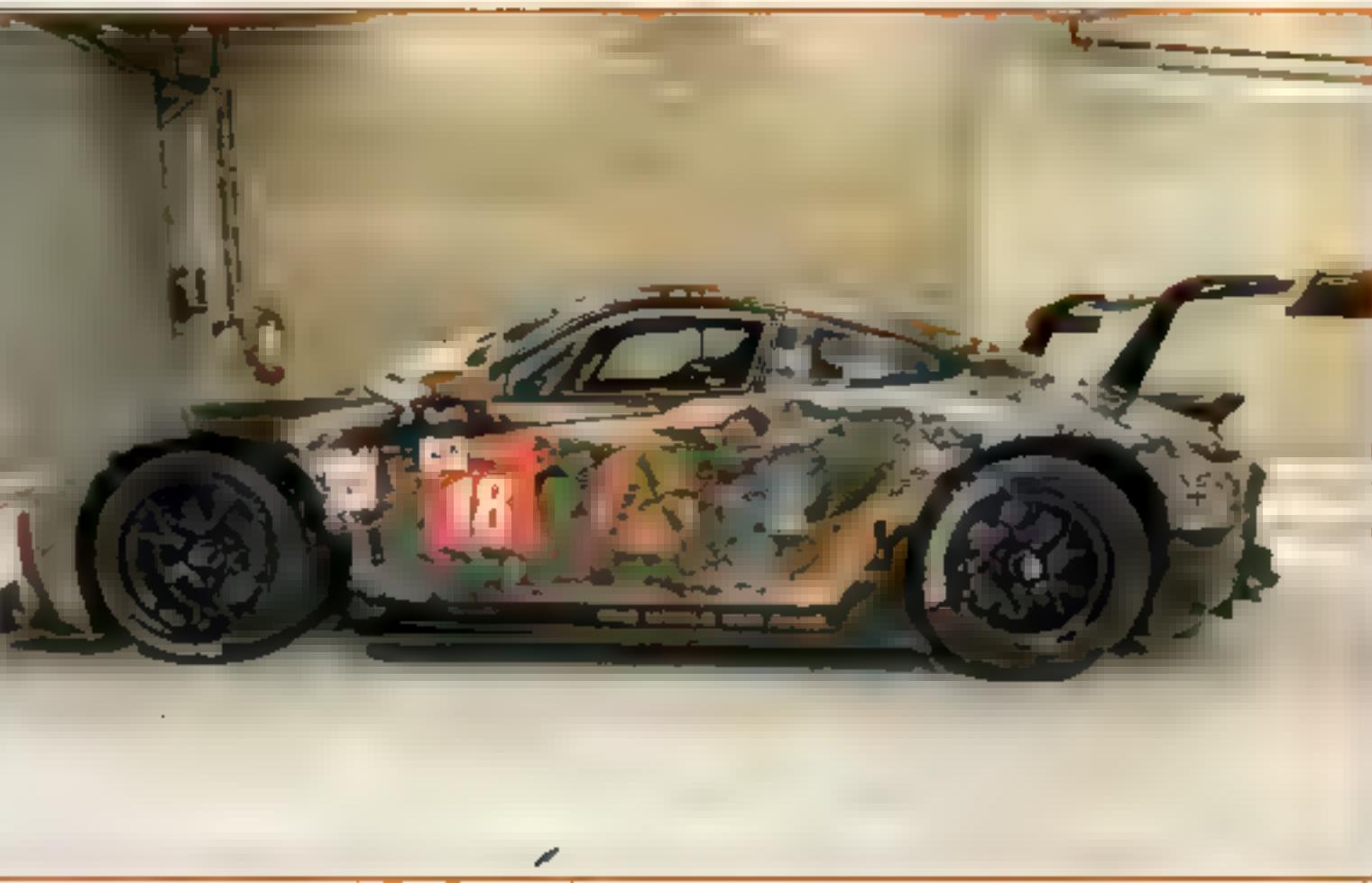


PORSCHE GT TEAM (Manthey) Porsche 911 RSR

91	GIANMARIA BRUNI	ITALY
	RICHARD LIETZ	GERMANY
	FREDERIC MAKOWIECKI	GERMANY
92	KEVIN ESTRE	FRANCE
	NEEL JANI	SWITZERLAND
	M CHAEL	GERMANY
	CHRISTENSEN	DENMARK

Porsche, like Ferrari, is hanging around in the GTE Pro ranks as it builds up towards its return to the top division in 2023, and fields a pair of mid-engined 911 RSRs. The line-up has been subtly tweaked: ex LMP1 man Jani is with Estre for the full season, with the duo joined by Christensen. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Porsche can take a first GTE Pro victory at Le Mans since 2018.





ABSOLUTE RACING (Proton) Porsche 911 RSR

18 ALESSIO PICARIELLO MARCO SEEFRIED ANDREW HARYANTO

This powerhouse of Asian GT racing makes its Le Mans debut in conjunction with the Proton team. They are fielding a Porsche for well-travelled GT racer Seefried, who will be making only a second Le Mans start, the Porsche-aligned Picariello, and Indonesian Haryanto.

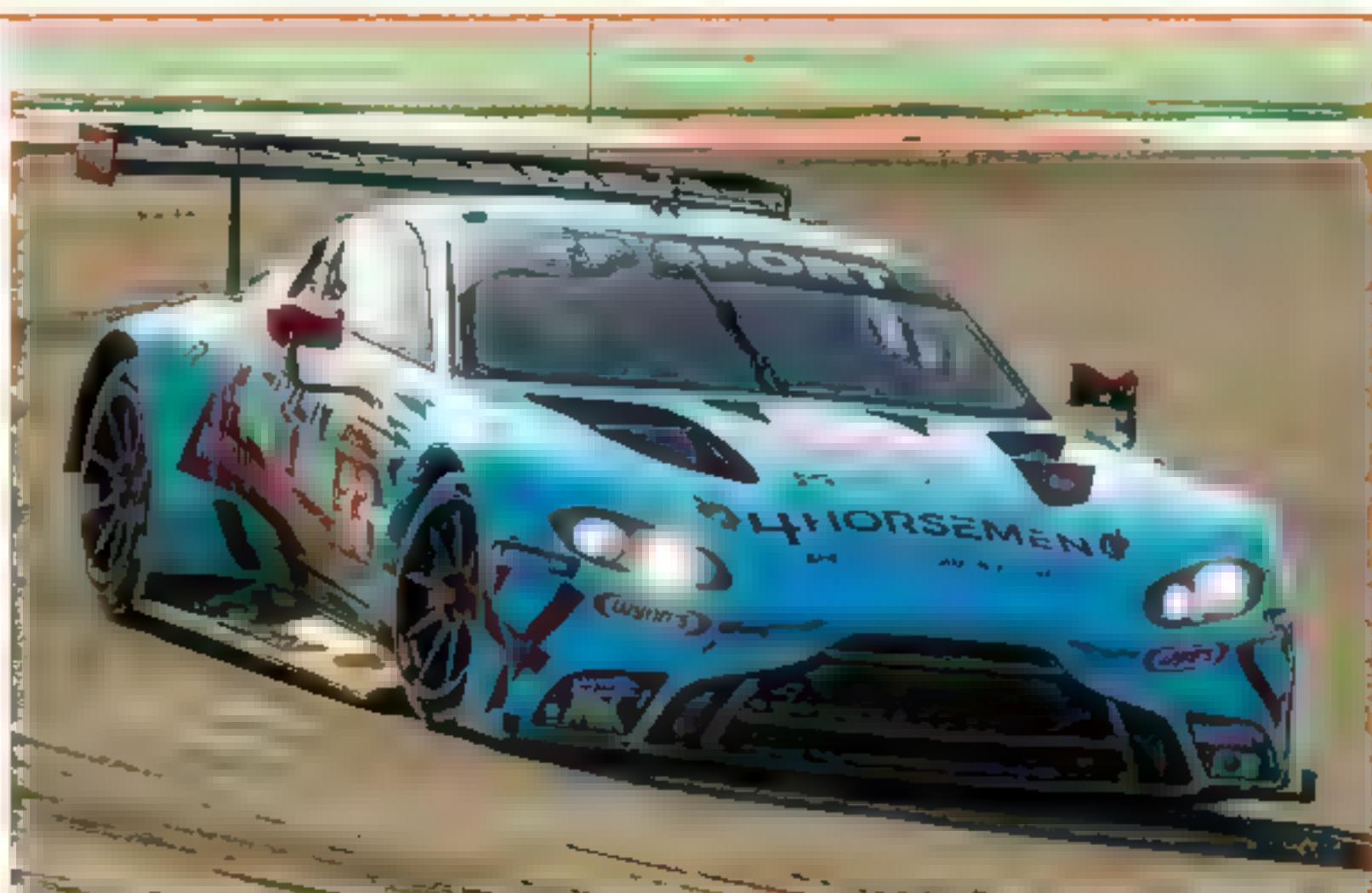
AUTOSPORT SAYS This line-up is better than it looked in its two WEC outings.

TF SPORT Aston Martin Vantage GTE

33 FELIPE FRAGA DYLAN PEREIRA BEN KEATING

95 ROSS GUNN OLLIE HANCOCK JOHN HARTSHORNE

This successful British squad was unlucky not to add last season's WEC GTE Am class title to its impressive CV. It's back in the series with the new line-up of Keating, Fraga and Pereira, while an additional Aston comes on stream for Le Mans for works driver Gunn, Hartshorne and Hancock. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** Keating and co will have the pace to go for the Am win he lost on a technicality in 2019.



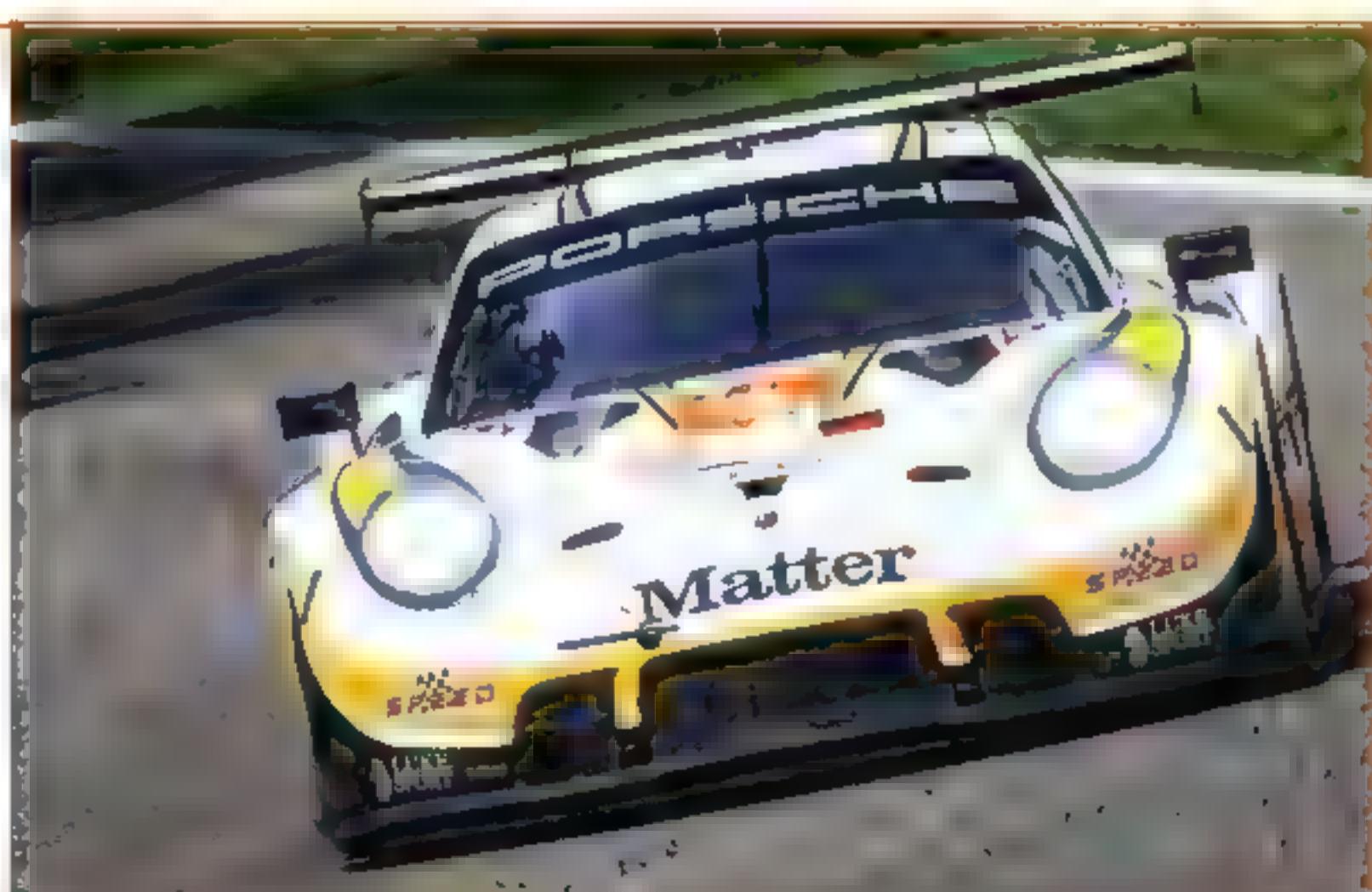
TEAM PROJECT 1 Porsche 911 RSR

46 DENNIS OLSEN MAXWELL ROOT ANDERS BUCHARDT

56 MATTEO CAIROLI RICCARDO PERA EGIDIO PERFETTI

Project 1 fields two rather than three Porsches as it looks to repeat the inherited 2019 Le Mans victory that sealed the class title at the end of its maiden WEC campaign. Perfetti, co-champion in 2018-19, is again joined by Cairoli, with Pera coming in as the Silver in the lead car.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Project 1 appears to be back in form after a lean period for much of last season.



CETILAR RACING (AF) Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

47 ANTONIO FUOCO GIORGIO SERNAGIOTTO ROBERTO LACORTE

The Italian team has found its feet and decent form after switching from the LMP2 class of the WEC to GTE Am for this season. Ferrari academy driver Fuoco, Sernagiotto and Lacorte have tasted victory in their 488 GTE Evo – which like their Dallara P2 is run by AF – and lead the Am points heading into Le Mans.

AUTOSPORT SAYS The surprise package of the season looks like it will be in the fight.



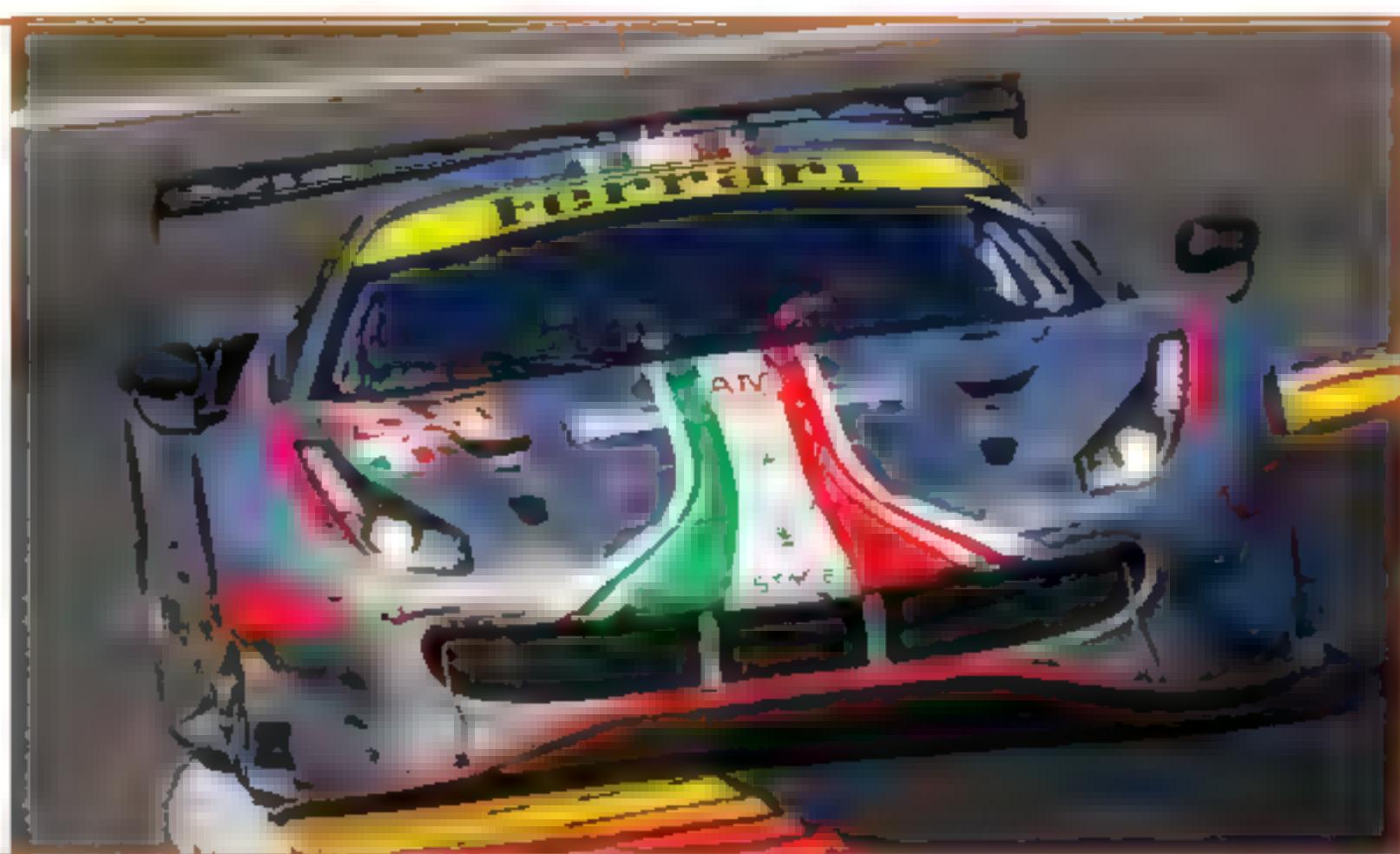
AF CORSE Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

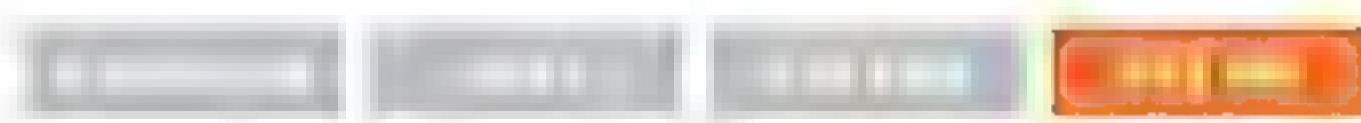
54 GIANCARLO FISICHELLA FRANCESCO CASTELLACCI THOMAS FLOHR

83 NICKLAS NIELSEN ALESSIO ROVERA FRANCOIS PERRODO

AF fields two cars under its own name in the Am ranks from its giant enclave in the paddock. Perrodo and factory driver Nielsen defend their WEC title with Rovera (the reigning Italian GT champ), while Fisichella, Castellacci and Flohr continue for a third season in the second car.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Strong start to 2021 suggests the Perrodo car could finally chalk up an LM win.



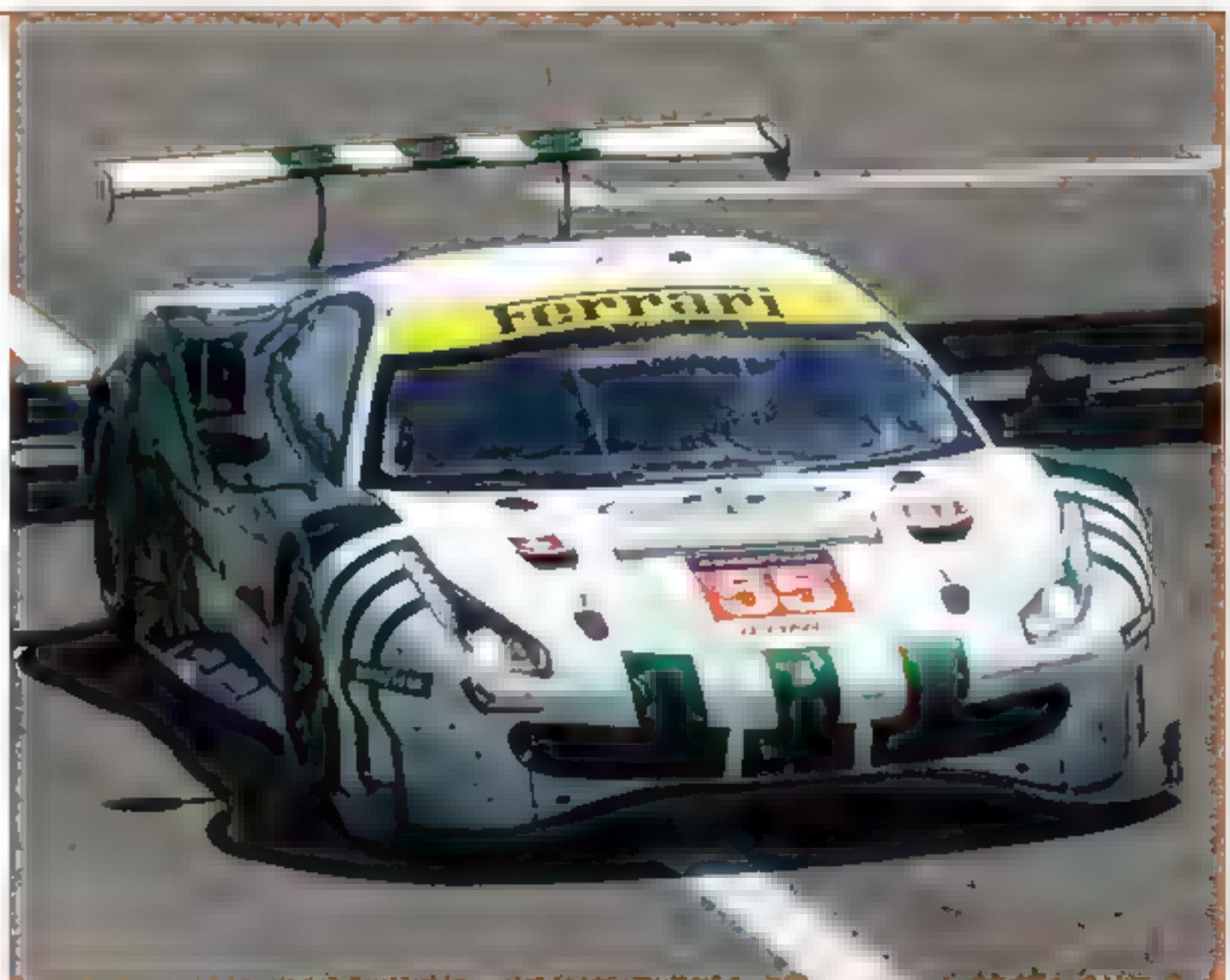


SPIRIT OF RACE (AF) Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

55 MATT GRIFFIN DAVID PEREL DUNCAN CAMERON

Yet another Ferrari is fielded by the giant AF operation under its alternate Spirit of Race banner. Griffin and Cameron, fresh from a Pro-Am class victory in the Spa 24 Hours with AF earlier this month, make a seventh consecutive Le Mans start together as part of another ELMS programme. South African Perel, their full-season Silver, is an experienced GT driver making his Le Mans debut.

AUTOSPORT SAYS An ELMS campaign in which the #55 Spirit car hasn't been off the podium bodes well.

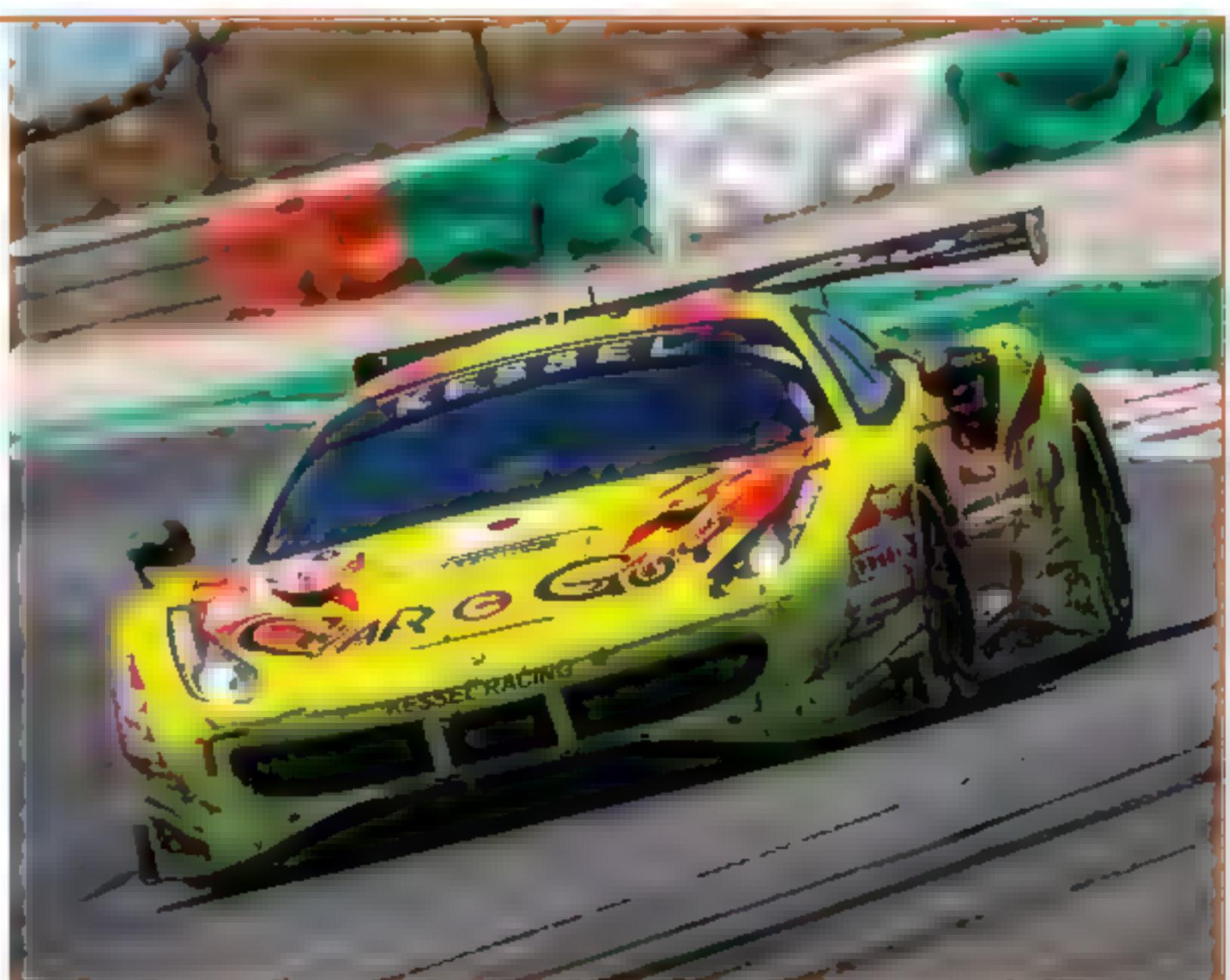


KESSEL RACING Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

57 M KEL JENSEN SCOTT ANDREWS TAKESHI KIMURA

This Swiss Ferrari specialist, a team established by sometime F1 racer Loris Kessel, is back at Le Mans after being forced to withdraw from last year's race. New Peugeot driver Jensen gets a second Le Mans under his belt in advance of next season. He joins Kimura, boss of the Japanese Car Guy team, and US-based Aussie Andrews, who is leading the LMP3 points in the Le Mans Cup ELMS support series.

AUTOSPORT SAYS It's a decent line-up led by Jensen, but probably lacks crucial depth of Le Mans experience.



IRON LYNX Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

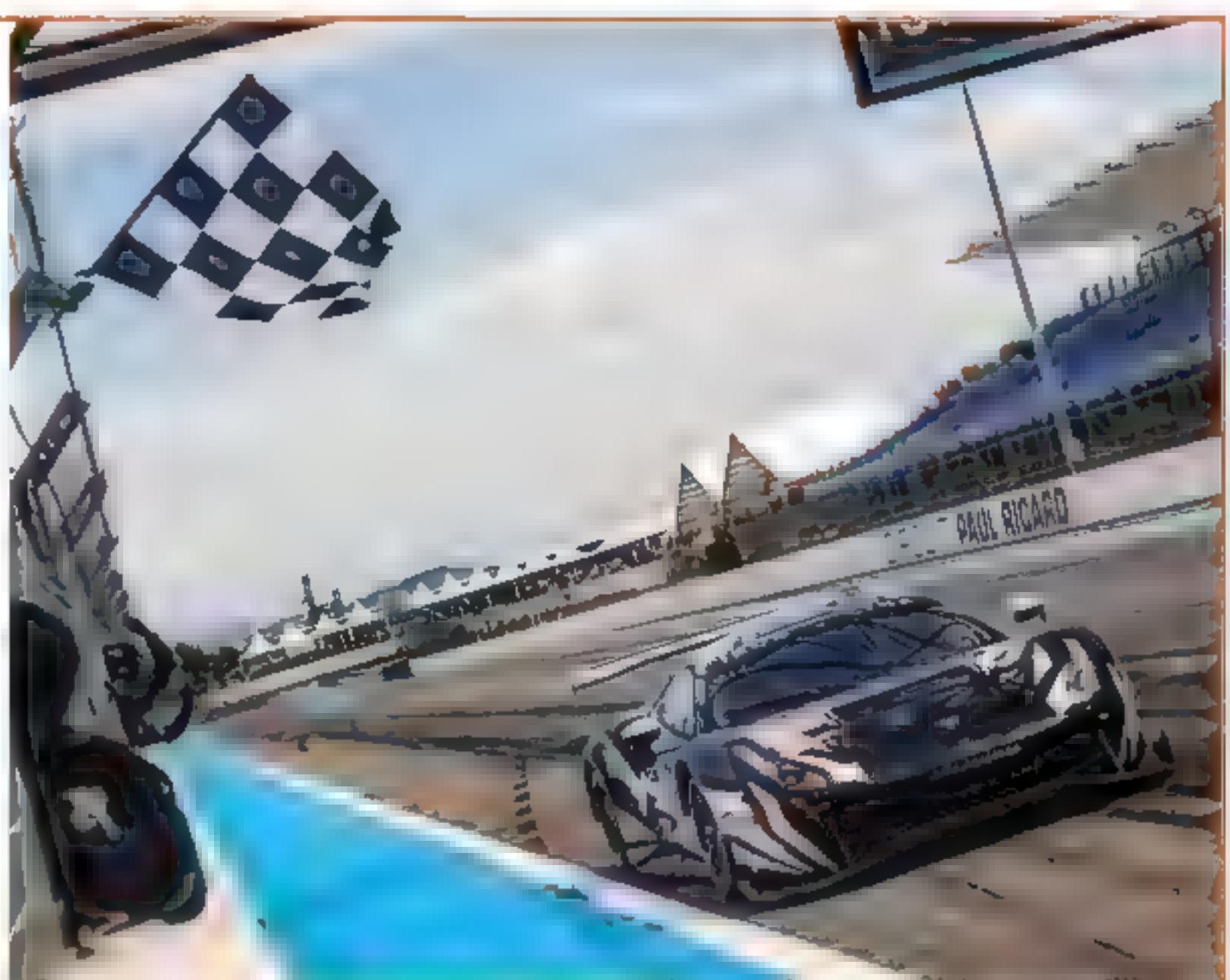
60 PAOLO RUBERTI RAFFAELE GIAMMARIA CLAUDIO SCHIAVONI

80 CALLUM ILOTT MATTEO CRESSONI RINO MASTRONARDI

85 RAHEL FREY SARAH BOVY MICHELLE GATTING

The team led by Andrea Piccini, a runner-up at Le Mans in GT1 with Aston Martin, makes its second Le Mans appearance, again with a trio of Ferraris. The Italian entrant is gradually expanding its own operation to become more independent from the AF Corse set-up. Experienced Belgian Bovy joins its all-female line-up, while Alfa Romeo F1 reserve Ilott makes his GTE debut after moving across from Iron Lynx's GT World Challenge Europe programme.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Three decent cars must give Iron Lynx a shot at a good result.



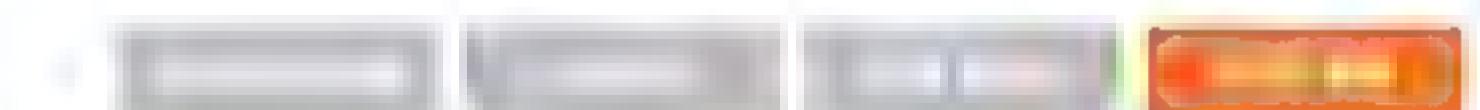
JMW MOTORSPORT Ferrari 488 GTE

66 THOMAS NEUBAUER JODY FANNIN RODRIGO SALES

The British JMW squad, winner of the Am class in 2017, is back at Le Mans for its 12th start in the big race. Brit Fannin, who was part of the team's successful GTE ELMS campaign in 2017, makes an overdue debut in the 24 Hours in a late line-up change alongside regular ELMS partner Sales from America and 22-year-old Neubauer, an ex-Formula Renault driver who cut his GT teeth in Ferraris.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Three Le Mans rookies will have to learn fast if they are to make an impact in the giant GTE Am class.





HERBERTH MOTORSPORT Porsche 911 RSR

69 ROBERT RENAUER
ROLF INEICHEN
RALF BOHN

The stalwart Porsche team run by identical twins Robert and Alfred Renauer was started by their late father, Alfred Herberth, 25 years ago, but is racing at Le Mans for the first time. This two-time winner of the German Porsche Carrera Cup owes its place on the grid to victory in the GT class of last winter's Asian Le Mans Series. Robert and Bohn continue after winning in Asia, and team up with Ineichen, best known for his GT3 exploits.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Team and drivers don't want for GT experience – except when it comes to racing at Le Mans.



SIEGERDESIGNS

INCEPTION RACING (Optimum) Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

71 BEN BARNICOAT
OLLIE MILLROY
BRENDAN IRIBE

Optimum Motorsport, which ran the British GT4 drivers' champions back in 2016, makes its Le Mans debut under Iribe's Inception banner. It won an automatic entry for its fourth-place finish in the GT standings in February's Asian LMS with a McLaren GT3 car, and has forged a partnership with Kessel to field a Ferrari in the 24 Hours. Barnicoat, who is on McLaren's books as a factory driver, and fellow Brit Millroy continue with Iribe from the Asian campaign.

AUTOSPORT SAYS A potential dark horse if Iribe arrives with his A-game.

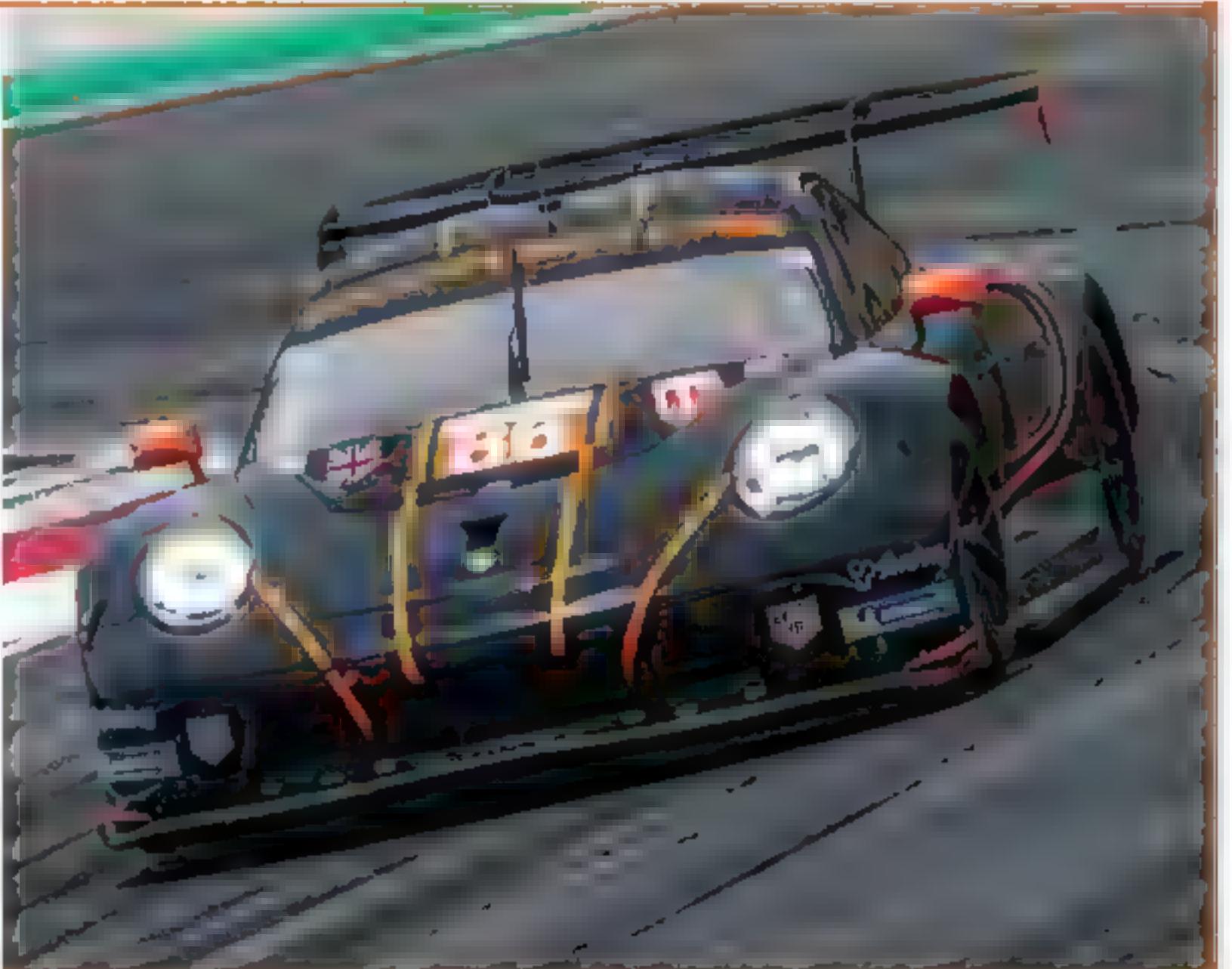


GR RACING Porsche 911 RSR

86 BEN BARKER
TOM GAMBLE
MICHAEL
WAINWRIGHT

This British team, a regular on the WEC trail and at Le Mans, now competes under the GR banner rather than the Gulf Racing UK name after ditching Gulf Oil colours last season. McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Gamble, who is also racing in LMP2 in the ELMS this year, has joined the full-season line-up alongside team owner Wainwright and his regular partner Barker.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Team needs to put its disappointing start to the WEC behind it if it is to have a chance of emulating last season's fifth in class.



PROTON COMPETITION Porsche 911 RSR

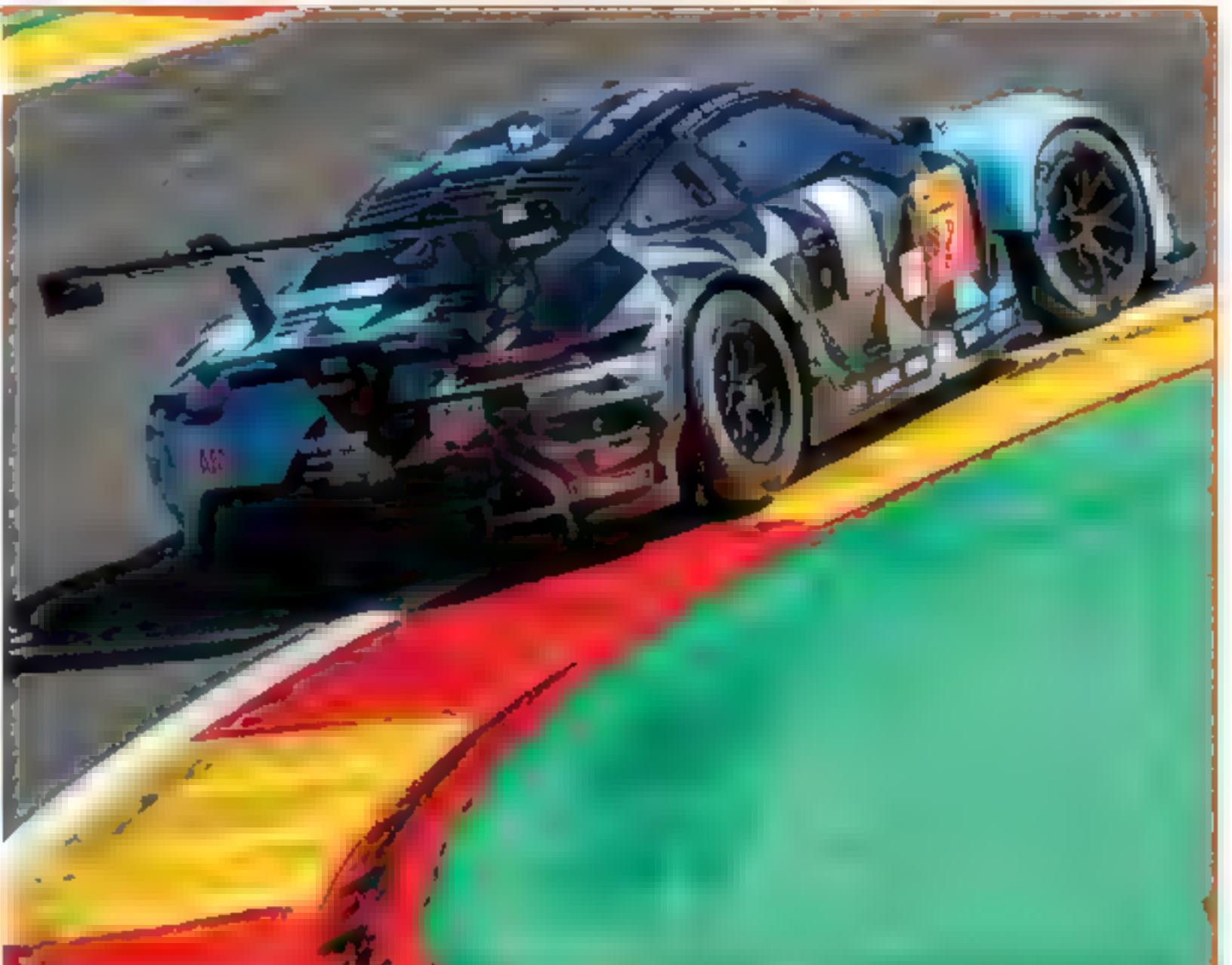
77 MATT CAMPBELL
JAXON EVANS
CHRISTIAN RIED

88 JULIEN ANDLAUER
LANCE DAVIS ARNOLD
DOMINIQUE BASTIEN

99 PATRICK LONG
FELIPE LASER
GIANLUCA GIRAUDI

The stalwart Proton Porsche team fields three cars in Am – two as Dempsey-Proton in deference to its tie-up with American actor Patrick Dempsey – in addition to running the WeatherTech and Absolute cars. Factory driver Long makes Le Mans start number 17 in the #99 Proton entry, which has won the ELMS GTE title last year, while Bastien makes his second at the age of 75.

AUTOSPORT SAYS The full-season WEC line-up of factory driver Campbell, Evans and team boss Ried is the line-up most likely to challenge at the front of the competitive GTE Am pack.



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PROFESSIONAL PORTABLE SUITS

ASTON MARTIN (Prodrive) Aston Martin Vantage GTE

98 NICKI THIIM MARCOS GOMES PAUL DALLA LANA

The in-house AMR team continues in Am after Aston's withdrawal from GTE Pro after last season. Team stalwart Dalla Lana is back for a ninth crack at Le Mans — and an eighth in Am — with a new line-up. Brazilian Stock Car Championship regular Gomes is the Silver, while factory driver Thiim has replaced the otherwise-engaged Augusto Farfus for this race. **AUTOSPORT SAYS** With second place at Monza, AMR is coming into form at the right time as Dalla Lana bids for an elusive first Le Mans win.

**RINALDI RACING** Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

388 JEROEN BLEEKEMOLEN PIERRE EHRET CHRISTIAN HOOK

A German team with an extensive GT3 record — it has multiple class victories at the Spa 24 Hours and an outright win in the Blancpain GT Series to its name — makes its Le Mans debut courtesy of a guaranteed grid spot garnered for finishing third in GT in February's Asian LMS. Team regular Ehret and Hook (who won the 2021 Asian LMS GT Am title with Rinaldi) are joined by the versatile Bleekemolen as their pro.

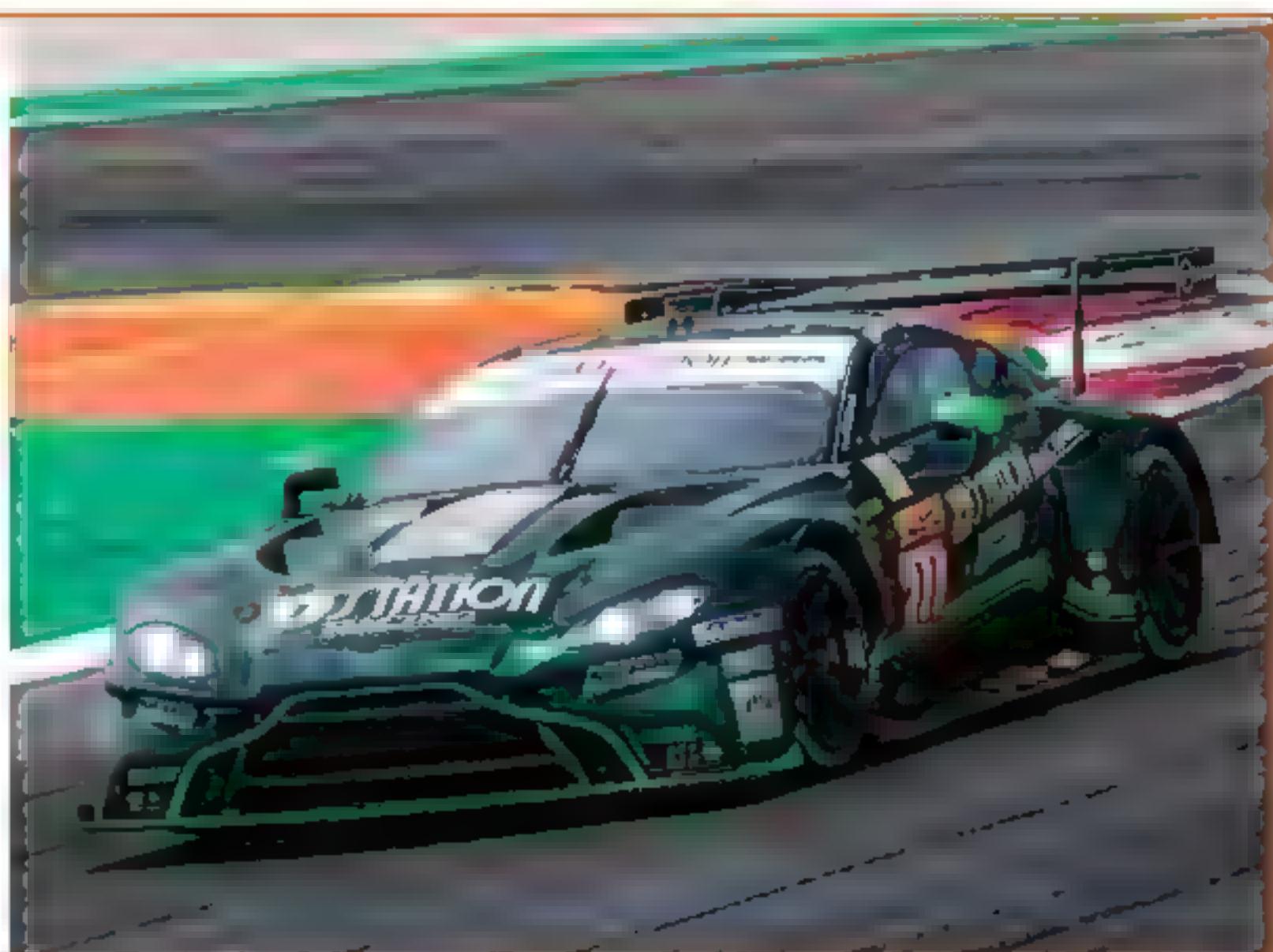
AUTOSPORT SAYS A line-up with two Bronzes will struggle to run at the sharp end in class.

**D'STATION RACING (TF)** Aston Martin Vantage GTE

777 TOMONOBU FUJII ANDREW WATSON SATOSHI HOSHINO

This stalwart of the Super GT Series in Japan has made the switch to the WEC for this season after two years flying the flag for Aston Martin in the GT300 class of its home series. TF runs the D'Station Vantage alongside its regular entries, while team boss Hoshino shares the car with team regular Fujii and former factory driver Watson.

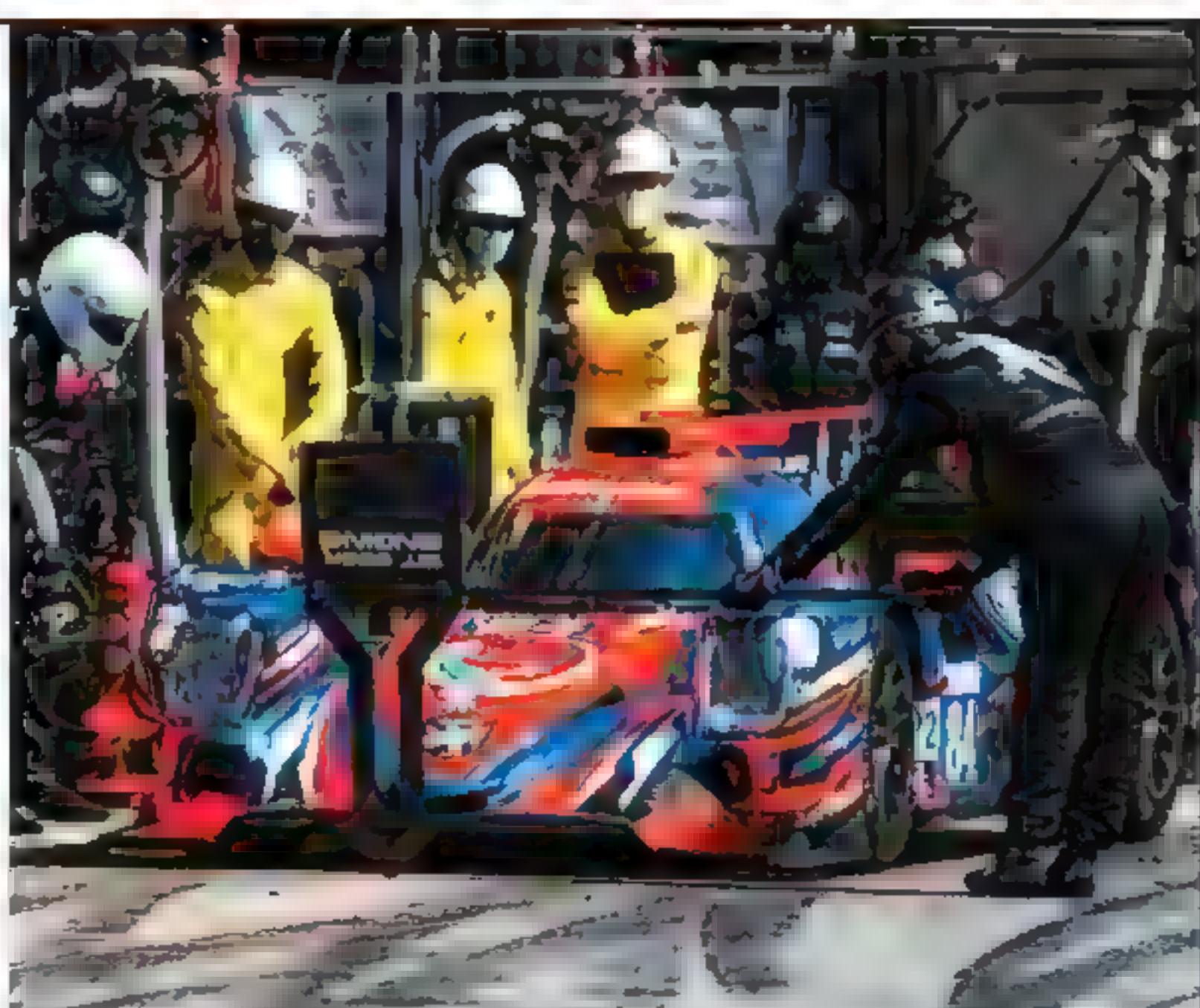
AUTOSPORT SAYS D'Station showed with third at Monza last month that when the Aston stays on the island it can be a contender.

**ASSOCIATION SRT41 (Graff)** ORECA-Gibson 07

84 TAKUMA AOKI NIGEL BAILLY FRANCOIS HERIAU

Frederic Sausset, the quadruple amputee who raced at Le Mans in 2016, has launched a scholarship to aid the advancement of disabled drivers and is back as an entrant. His SRT41 organisation is fielding a specially adapted ORECA run by Graff in the same 'Garage 56' grid spot for an innovative car he filled five years ago. Paraplegics Aoki (a podium finisher in 500cc motorcycle grands prix in the late 1990s) and Bailly are joined by ELMS regular Heriau.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Aoki and Bailly should aspire to match Sausset's impressive 2016 performance.



INNOVATIVE CAR



How a famous team failed to win Le Mans with the greatest car

The JW Automotive Engineering Gulf squad and the Porsche 917 made for a formidable combination. But things just didn't fall into place in the Big One

KEVIN TURNER

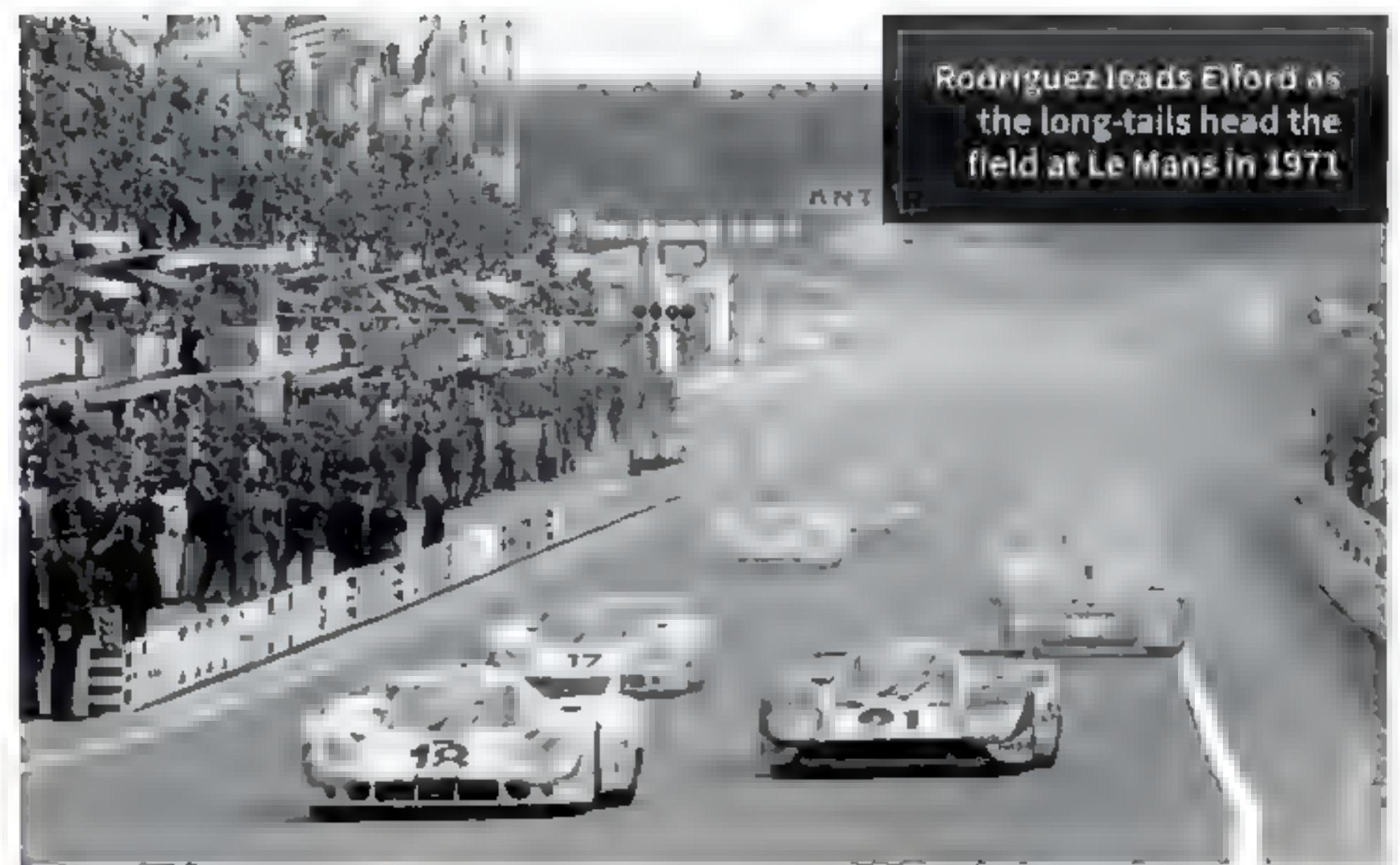
PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

There is some great real footage from Steve McQueen's film, *Le Mans*. But, aside from the dubious wheel-to-wheel 'racing' in the closing stages, one thing that really stands out is that a Gulf Porsche 917 wins.

In real life, the JW Automotive Engineering Gulf squad had won Le Mans with the ageing Ford GT40 in 1968-69 and was the team to beat in the world sportscar championship once it joined forces with old rival Porsche for 1970-71. But Le Mans success with the iconic blue-and-orange 917s eluded John Wyer's team.

An engine failure, a crash and a missed shift by Jo Siffert had robbed the team in 1970, the year in which the film was set, but JWA looked strong again the following year, when the film was released. Porsche's work on the long-tailed version of the 917 had turned it from a wayward beast that only Rolf Stommelen and Vic Elford had wanted to drive in 1969 to the car to have in 1971.

Jackie Oliver, drafted in alongside JWA's Pedro Rodriguez to replace Leo Kinnunen for 1971, knew the car was good when he drove it at the test day in April. "Helmut Fegl [Porsche engineer]



Rodriguez leads Elford as the long-tails head the field at Le Mans in 1971

Despite opposition from nine Ferrari 512s and a works Matra MS660, the only car likely to upset the Porsche steamroller was Penske's immaculate Ferrari 512M, which had outpaced the 917Ks at both Daytona and Sebring. Mark Donohue outqualified all the short-tailed Porsches again, but even he was 4.6s slower than the best of the 917Ls, which qualified 1-2-3.

"I am satisfied with practice results and I don't think there is any reason not to think about triumph, unless I suffer some mechanical incident or a crash," polesitter Rodriguez told the daily newspaper *Ovaciones*. "It's well known in these races the car is the most important thing; it is what has to stand the hardest effort and it is difficult for it to keep a fast pace during 24 hours without getting tired. Anyway, I am enthusiastic about the car and I think there will be no problems."

Rodriguez duly led from the rolling start – the event's first – and typically quick JWA pitwork at the first round of stops helped Siffert secure second. Siffert's second stop was faster than Rodriguez's and he took the lead, but the Mexican soon caught the Swiss and the two circulated together at the front of the field.

A minor electrical issue then struck Siffert/Derek Bell, leaving Oliver and Rodriguez a lap ahead of the pack after three hours.

"It is well known the car is the most important thing; it has to stand the hardest effort"

was worried about instability at anything over 300km/h [186mph], so when I got up to that speed I would zig-zag to see if there was an imbalance," recalls Oliver. "I did five laps and did a 3m13.6s – Fegl was so relieved! Even the White House curves were flat, apart from perhaps the last one."

Oliver's time was more than six seconds faster than Elford's pole lap in the 1970 Langheck the year before. Accounts of just how fast the car was down the Mulsanne Straight vary, but Oliver recalls being told it was 247mph. There can be no doubt that it was the fastest Le Mans car until Group C in the late 1980s.

"We believed we had the best cars and the best drivers and that nothing could stop us winning," wrote Wyer, who died in 1989, in his famous book *The Certain Sound*.

For the race, the Porsche effort was astounding. JWA, having spurned the long-tailed 917s the year before, this time ran two (prepared at the Porsche factory), with a back-up 917K (prepared at JWA's Slough base) driven by 1970 winner Richard Attwood and Herbert Muller. The Martini team had a long-tail for Elford/Gerard Larrousse, a one-off magnesium-chassis short-tail for Helmut Marko/Gijs van Lennep, plus the infamous 917/20 'Pig', which attempted – not entirely successfully – to combine the straightline speed of the long tail with the short-tail's handling.

As others hit trouble, JWA's position looked strong. At quarter distance it held first, second and third, Attwood/Muller running two laps behind the leaders.

But handling problems for Siffert during the night were traced to a rear hub bearing failure, and then Oliver suffered the same problem shortly before half distance. "My belief is that the total enclosure by the long tail – on the 917K the whole of the back of the car was open to atmosphere – caused overheating of the transmission and driveline assembly," argued Wyer.

The rear corner was rebuilt more quickly the second time around and the #18 car resumed in fourth, Rodriguez beginning one of his characteristic charges. Such was the combination's pace, victory was not yet out of the question. ▶



John Wyer won Le Mans – but never with a 917



Gearbox change cost Attwood/
Muller 917K a likely victory in 1971

Then the fastest car in the race suffered an oil pipe failure, covering the cockpit in hot oil. Rodriguez somehow got it back to the pits but the engine was done. "Pedro's and Jackie's fine drives were finished," reported Autosport. "They had comfortably dominated the first 10 hours of the race." All they had to show was Oliver's new lap record of 3m18.4s, an average of nearly 152mph.

"The hose was of German manufacture, supplied by Porsche, whereas on the cars prepared at Slough we fitted British hoses," wrote a frustrated Wyer. "It should have been the car to win," reckons Oliver, who had won the race in 1969 driving the same Gulf GT40 that Rodriguez had used to win the year before. "Pedro

"Pedro and I were quick in that car at Le Mans. It would have been great to get a second win"

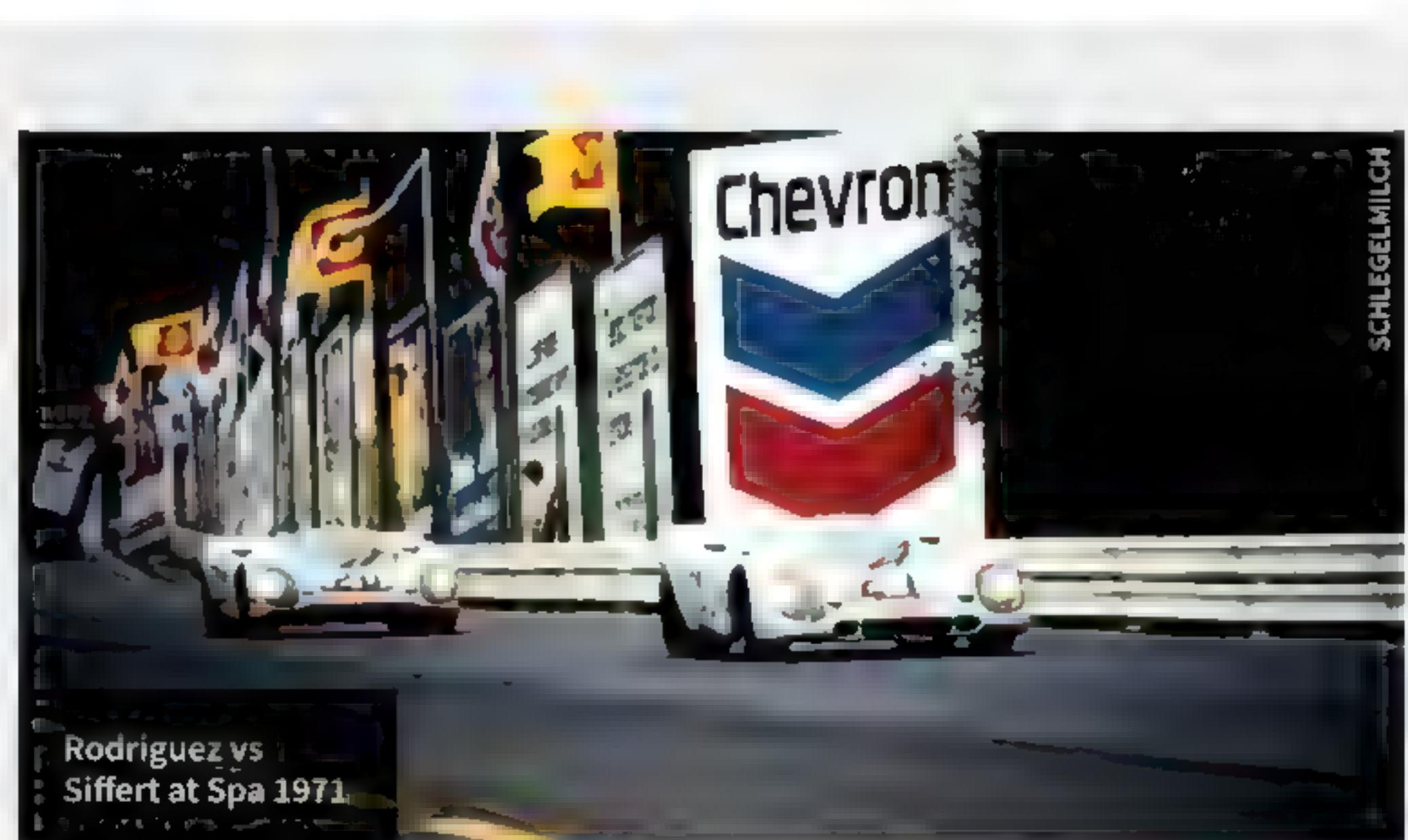
and I were quick in that car at Le Mans. It was phenomenal. It was so disappointing the oil cooler line broke and sprayed Pedro with oil. It would have been great to get a second win."

The Siffert/Bell car never got back into contention and eventually succumbed to a smoky engine but, even with the two long-tails out, Wyer's squad could still have won, thanks to Attwood and Muller. They had qualified 11th – four places higher than Attwood the year before – but had no intention of trying to set the pace, and gradually moved forward. "When I had learned my co-driver was Herbert Muller, a bit of a boy racer who had crashed his car during filming for Le Mans, I thought he might not be the ideal partner," recalls Attwood. "I was a bit concerned so I gave directions as to how we should run the race, but he drove absolutely perfectly. We thought we'd pedal it along and see where we ended up. There wasn't a thought of winning because the long-tail cars had a 30mph advantage on the straight. But the long tails always had problems at Le Mans."

Penske's Ferrari, having climbed as high as second, had also gone out with engine failure, while the Martini long-tail 917 had lost its cooling fan, resulting in a cooked flat-12. And so it came down to a



JWA attack fell
apart in 1970



JWA'S wins with the 917

From 17 world championship sportscar races running 917s as part of the works Porsche programme, the JW Automotive Engineering team took 11 wins. Sebring and Le Mans were the elusive races, ironically the two events in which JWA had beaten Porsche in 1969, using the Ford GT40.

DATE	EVENT	DRIVERS
1970	Daytona 24 Hours	Pedro Rodriguez/Leo Kinnunen/Brian Redman
1970	BOAC 1000Km	Pedro Rodriguez/Leo Kinnunen
1970	Monza 1000Km	Pedro Rodriguez/Leo Kinnunen
1970	Spa 1000Km	Jo Siffert/Brian Redman
1970	Watkins Glen 6 Hours	Pedro Rodriguez/Leo Kinnunen
1970	Osterreichring 1000Km	Jo Siffert/Brian Redman
1971	Buenos Aires 1000Km	Jo Siffert/Derek Bell
1971	Daytona 24 Hours	Pedro Rodriguez/Jackie Oliver
1971	Monza 1000Km	Pedro Rodriguez/Jackie Oliver
1971	Spa 1000Km	Pedro Rodriguez/Jackie Oliver
1971	Osterreichring 1000Km	Pedro Rodriguez/Richard Attwood

fight between the Gulf 917K and the Marko/van Lennep car. Not for the first time, Wyer was battling a second factory Porsche team.

"Wyer had done a deal with Stuttgart at the end of 1969 to be the works team, and I think he was flabbergasted to see [factory-supported] Porsche Salzburg cars in 1970 and then Martini cars," says Attwood, who had taken his Le Mans success with the Salzburg team. "But there wasn't much he could do about it. I think he knew he could do a good job and he did."

But the crucial moment had already come, just before the halfway mark, when the Gulf 917K lost fifth gear and required a gearbox change, taking anything from 27 minutes to 45 depending on accounts (though we're inclined to go with the studious Wyer's 37 minutes). It was the only time Wyer had decided to run the five-speed gearbox instead of the four-speed and he paid the price.

"In the 917 transmissions the synchronising clutch body was threaded into the free-running gear," explained Wyer. "Depending upon the direction of rotation, the synchronising torque tended to screw up or unscrew the clutch body in the gear. If the clutch body became unscrewed it blocked the gearbox and it was then impossible to select any gears. This is exactly what happened to Muller at Le Mans." Wyer also claimed that JWA chief engineer John Horsman had suggested a solution rejected by Porsche.

Attwood/Muller had been running ahead of the Martini car when the gearbox problem struck and they gradually whittled away the disadvantage afterwards, closing from around five laps down to two at the finish, but van Lennep/Marko simply didn't spend enough time in the pits to be caught. The winners covered 397 laps, setting a Le Mans distance record that would stand until 2010.

And so the JWA team was beaten by a factory 917K run by essentially a rival works team, using an experimental chassis not offered to Wyer. "By finishing second with a normal 917K, we were able to demonstrate we could have won without it," said Wyer.

"There's no doubt we would have won the race without the gearbox problem," says Attwood. "John Wyer didn't win Le Mans [with the 917], but that wasn't his fault. Two of his cars in 1970 went out through driver error, but that's how Le Mans is. It either comes to you or it doesn't."

And only in the fictional world did Le Mans victory come to a Gulf-liveried 917. ■



The track

Circuit de la Sarthe

Circuit length 8.47 miles

2020 POLES

LMP1 3m15.267s Kamui Kobayashi, Toyota TS050 HYBRID

LMP2 3m24.528s Paul di Resta, ORECA-Gibson 07

GTE PRO 3m50.874s Gianmaria Bruni, Porsche 911 RSR

GTE AM 3m51.266s Come Ledogar Ferrari 488 GTE Evo



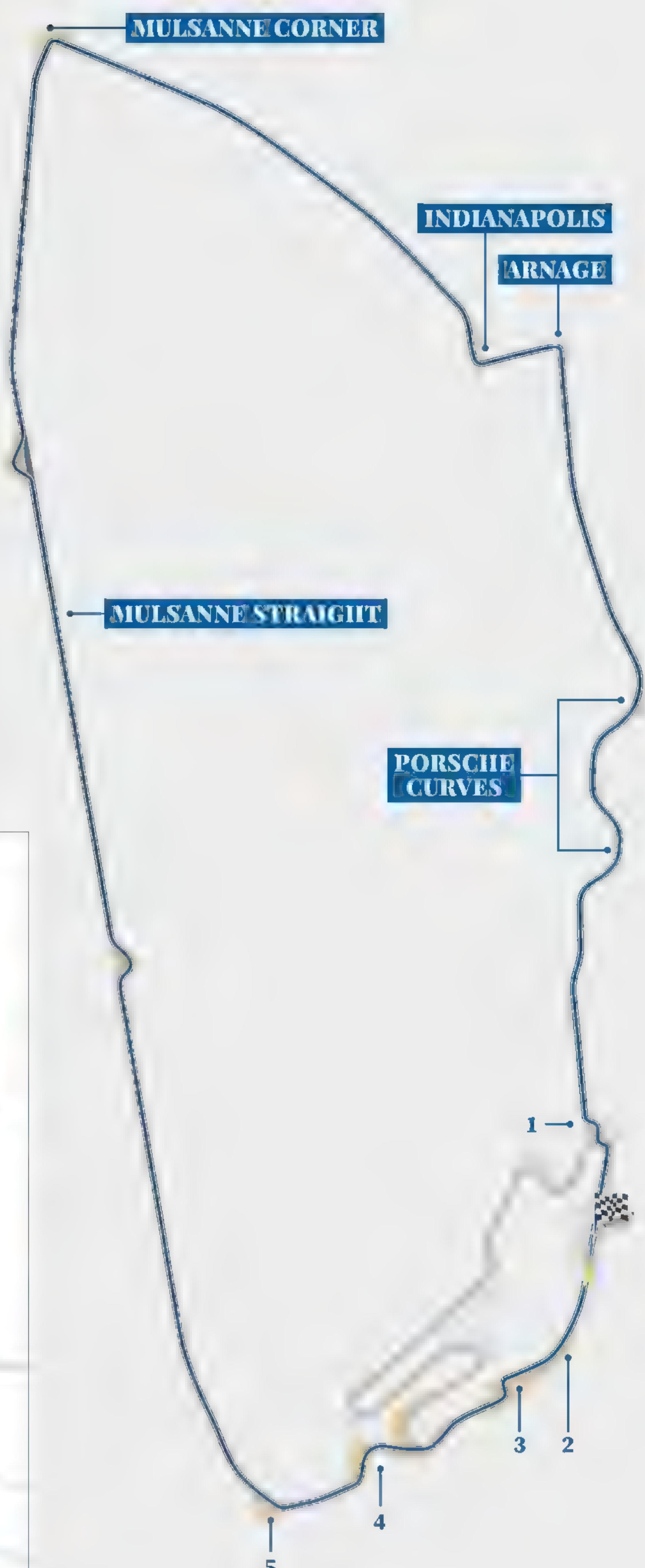
2020 FASTEST LAPS

LMP1 3m19.264s Bruno Senna, Rebellion-Gibson R-13

LMP2 3m27.508s Job van Uitert, ORECA-Gibson 07

GTE PRO 3m50.321s Alex Lynn, Aston Martin Vantage GTE

GTE AM 3m52.449s Ross Gunn, Aston Martin Vantage GTE



Records and trivia

Some essential info – and some stuff to get you winning the pub quiz

JAMES NEWBOLD AND KEVIN TURNER

FOLLOW THE ACTION

As the biggest race on the sportscar racing calendar, there are naturally plenty of options to keep you in the loop.

As usual, Eurosport is the main broadcast partner for TV coverage. A monthly package that allows fans to watch in HD on multiple devices, with access to on-demand videos and a multicamera view, costs £6.99, or there is an option to buy a yearly pass for £29.99.

Regular highlights will be available to watch on Autosport.com, where our team of journalists will be providing full live text coverage from every session, plus news reports and features.

If you're out and about, then tune in to Radio Le Mans, which also has blanket coverage from its team of specialist experts.

See page 50 for event timetable

TRIVIA

This year's Le Mans 24 Hours will be the first without a factory Aston Martin Racing presence in the GTE Pro class since 2011, when it was an LMP1 entrant. But it will still have a 'works' involvement in the GTE Am class, with Paul Dalla Lana's entry staffed by Prodrive.



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

are among the nine drivers to have won in three consecutive years.

GTE Am driver Ben Keating is entered in his seventh different car in as many appearances at the race. The TF Sport Aston Martin driver has driven Ferrari, Ford and Porsche GT cars, and before that raced a Viper, and LMP2 cars from ORECA and Multimatic.

The fastest lap time ever recorded on the Circuit de la Sarthe was by Kamui Kobayashi in claiming pole for the 2017 race. The Japanese set an average speed of 156.51mph in his LMP1 Toyota.

The fastest Le Mans was held in 2010 (above), when Timo Bernhard, Romain Dumas and Mike Rockenfeller took their Audi R15-plus TDI to victory. They completed 397 laps – 3362 miles.

A total of 32 British drivers are in the entry, making the UK the most-represented nation in the race. Among their number are five previous winners of the McLaren Autosport BRDC Award (now Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award): Anthony Davidson, Paul di Resta, Oliver Jarvis, Alexander Sims and Tom Gamble.

Jan and Kevin Magnussen will not be the only father-son pairing in the race, with Slovaks Miro and Mato Konopka sharing their ARC Bratislava ORECA. Graff drivers Arnold and Maxime Robin are the only brothers driving the same car.

Victory for the #8 Toyota would be the fourth in a row for Sébastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima. They

2021 WEC STANDINGS

HYPERCAR DRIVERS		PTS
POS	DRIVERS	
1	Brendon Hartley/Kazuki Nakajima/Sébastien Buemi	75
2	Jose Maria Lopez/Kamui Kobayashi/Mike Conway	69
3	Andre Negrao/Matthieu Vaxiviere/Nicolas Lapierre	60
4	Richard Westbrook/Romain Dumas	33
5	Ryan Briscoe	18
6	Franck Mailleux	15
HYPERCAR MANUFACTURERS		
1	Toyota Gazoo Racing	90
2	Alpine Elf Matmut	60
3	Glickenhaus Racing	13
LMP2 DRIVERS		
1	Phil Hanson	74
2	Anthony Davidson/Antonio Felix da Costa/Roberto Gonzalez	56
3	Sean Gelael/Stoffel Vandoorne/Tom Blomqvist	53
4	Fabio Scherer/Filipe Albuquerque	51
LMP2 PRO-AM DRIVERS		
1	Norman Nato/Esteban Garcia	71
2	Frits van Eerd	68
3	Ben Hanley/Juan Pablo Montoya/Henrik Hedman	60
4	Anders Fjordbach/Jan Magnussen/Dennis Andersen	47
GTE DRIVERS		
1	Kevin Estre/Neel Jani	76
2	Alessandro Pier Guidi/James Calado	74
3	Daniel Serra/Miguel Molina	54
4	Gianmaria Bruni/Richard Lietz	45
5	Michael Christensen	24
6	Antonio Fuoco/Giorgio Sernagiotto/Roberto Lacorte	21.5
GTE MANUFACTURERS		
1	Ferrari	128
2	Porsche	121
GTE AM DRIVERS		
1	Antonio Fuoco/Giorgio Sernagiotto/Roberto Lacorte	54
2	Alessio Rovera/François Perrodo/Nicklas Nielsen	52
3	Augusto Farfus/Marcos Gomes/Paul Dalla Lana	44
4	Francesco Castellacci/Giancarlo Fisichella/Thomas Flohr	41

MOST LE MANS WINS

MANUFACTURERS		DRIVERS	
1	Porsche	19	1 Tom Kristensen
2	Audi	13	2 Jacky Ickx
3	Ferrari	9	3= Derek Bell
4	Jaguar	7	3= Frank Biela
5	Bentley	6	3= Emanuele Pirro

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FROM THE ARCHIVE

The #33 works Porsche 906 shared by Peter Gregg and Sten Axelsson passes the wrecked cars of Georges Heligouin/Johnny Rives (#53 CD-Peugeot SP66), Mike Parkes/

Ludovico Scarfiotti (#20 factory Ferrari 330P3) and Jo Schlesser/Alan Rees (#42 Matra-BRM MS620), which had crashed out overnight during the 1966 Le Mans 24 Hours in an incident precipitated by heavy rain.

The Porsche was running in seventh place when it suffered engine problems at its final pitstop. Gregg was set to rejoin the field for the last lap, but the 906 failed to restart and became the race's final retirement.

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 **motorsport**
IMAGES

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LE MANS GUIDE

LMH			WEDNESDAY 18 AUGUST		
NO	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	0830-0930	Fun Cup
7	Mike Conway (GBR) Kamui Kobayashi (JPN) Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	0930-1030	Free Practice 1
8	Sebastien Buemi (CHE) Kazuki Nakajima (JPN) Brendon Hartley (NZL)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota GR010 HYBRID	1030-1130	Road to Le Mans
36	Nicolas Lapierre (FRA) Andre Negrao (BRA) Matthieu Vaxiviere (FRA)	Alpine Elf Matmut (Signatech)	Alpine-Gibson A480	1130-1230	Free Practice 1
708	Pipo Derani (BRA) Olivier Pla (FRA) Franck Mailleux (FRA)	Glickenhaus Racing	Glickenhaus-Pipo 007 LMH	1200-1300	Fun Cup
709	Ryan Briscoe (AUS) Richard Westbrook (GBR) Romain Dumas (FRA)	Glickenhaus Racing	Glickenhaus-Pipo 007 LMH	1300-1400	Free Practice 2
LMP2			1400-1700		
1	Tatiana Calderon (COL) Sophia Florsch (DEU) Beitske Visser (NLD)	Richard Mille Racing Team (Signatech)	ORECA-Gibson 07	Le Mans 24 Hours	Free Practice 1
17	Ryan Dalziel (GBR) Kyle Tilley (GBR) Dwight Merriman (USA)	IDEC Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07	1730-1815	Fun Cup
20	Ricky Taylor (USA) Marco Sorensen (DNK) Dennis Andersen (DNK)	High Class Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	Qualifying	
21	Juan Pablo Montoya (COL) Ben Hanley (GBR) Henrik Hedman (SWE)	DragonSpeed USA	ORECA-Gibson 07	1900-2000	Le Mans 24 Hours
22	Filipe Albuquerque (prt) Phil Hanson (GBR) Fabio Scherer (CHE)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07	Qualifying	
23	Paul di Resta (GBR) Alex Lynn (GBR) Wayne Boyd (GBR)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07	2030-2130	Road to Le Mans
24	Gabriel Aubry (FRA) Simon Trummer (CHE) Patrick Kelly (USA)	PR1 Mathiasen Motorsports (Panis)	ORECA-Gibson 07	Free Practice 2	
25	Roberto Merhi (ESP) Rui Andrade (PRT) John Falb (USA)	G-Drive Racing (Algarve Pro)	ORECA-Gibson 07	2200-0000	Le Mans 24 Hours
26	Nyck de Vries (NLD) Roman Rusinov (RUS) Franco Colapinto (ARG)	G-Drive Racing (Algarve Pro)	ORECA-Gibson 07	Free Practice 2	
28	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL) Tom Blomqvist (GBR) Sean Gelael (IDN)	Jota	ORECA-Gibson 07	THURSDAY 19 AUGUST	
29	Giedo van der Garde (NLD) Job van Uitert (NLD) Frits van Eerd (NLD)	Racing Team Nederland (TDS)	ORECA-Gibson 07	0900-0945	Porsche Sprint Challenge
30	Tristan Gommendy (FRA) Memo Rojas (MEX) Rene Binder (AUT)	Duqueine Team	ORECA-Gibson 07	Free Practice 1	
31	Robin Frijns (NLD) Ferdinand Habsburg (AUT) Charles Milesi (FRA)	Team WRT	ORECA-Gibson 07	1040-1100	Road to Le Mans
32	Nico Jamin (FRA) Jonathan Aberdein (ZAF) Manuel Maldonado (VEN)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07	Qualifying 1	
34	Renger van der Zande (NLD) Alex Brundle (GBR) Jakub Smiechowski (POL)	InterEuropol Competition	ORECA-Gibson 07	1115-1135	Road to Le Mans
38	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT) Anthony Davidson (GBR) Roberto Gonzalez (MEX)	Jota	ORECA-Gibson 07	Qualifying 2	
39	Vincent Capillaire (FRA) Maxime Robin (FRA) Arnold Robin (FRA)	SO24-Dirop by Graff	ORECA-Gibson 07	1225-1310	Endurance Racing Legends
41	Robert Kubica (POL) Louis Deletraz (CHE) Yifei Ye (CHN)	Team WRT	ORECA-Gibson 07	Free Practice	
44	Oliver Webb (GBR) Mato Konopka (SVK) Miro Konopka (SVK)	ARC Bratislava	ORECA-Gibson 07	1400-1700	Le Mans 24 Hours
48	Patrick Pilet (FRA) Paul-Loup Chatin (FRA) Paul Lafargue (FRA)	IDEC Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07	Free Practice 3	
49	Jan Magnussen (DNK) Kevin Magnussen (DNK) Anders Fjordbach (DNK)	High Class Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	1800-1845	Endurance Racing Legends
65	Will Stevens (GBR) James Allen (AUS) Julien Canal (FRA)	Panis Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07	Qualifying	
70	Loic Duval (FRA) Norman Nato (FRA) Esteban Garcia (CHE)	Realteam Racing (TDS)	ORECA-Gibson 07	1930-2025	Road to Le Mans
74	James Winslow (GBR) John Corbett (AUS) Tom Cloet (BEL)	Racing Team India Eurasia	ORECA-Gibson 07	Race 1	
82	Oliver Jarvis (GBR) Felipe Nasr (BRA) Ryan Cullen (GBR)	Risi Competizione	ORECA-Gibson 07	2100-2130	Le Mans 24 Hours
GTE PRO			Hyperpole		
51	Alessandro Pier Guidi (ITA) James Calado (GBR) Come Ledogar (FRA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	2200-0000	Le Mans 24 Hours
52	Daniel Serra (BRA) Miguel Molina (ESP) Davide Rigon (ITA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	Free Practice 4	
63	Antonio Garcia (ESP) Jordan Taylor (USA) Nicky Catsburg (NLD)	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C8.R	FRIDAY 20 AUGUST	
64	Tommy Milner (USA) Nick Tandy (GBR) Alexander Sims (GBR)	Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)	Chevrolet Corvette C8.R	0900-0945	Porsche Sprint Challenge
72	Alvaro Parente (PRT) Maxime Martin (BEL) Dries Vanthoor (BEL)	HubAuto Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	Free Practice 2	
79	Earl Bamber (NZL) Laurens Vanthoor (BEL) Cooper MacNeil (USA)	WeatherTech Racing (Proton)	Porsche 911 RSR	1040-1100	Road to Le Mans
91	Gianmaria Bruni (ITA) Richard Lietz (AUT) Frederic Makowiecki (FRA)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	Qualifying 1	
92	Kevin Estre (FRA) Neel Jani (CHE) Michael Christensen (DNK)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR	1115-1135	Road to Le Mans
GTE AM			Qualifying 2		
18	Alessio Picariello (BEL) Marco Seefried (DEU) Andrew Haryanto (IDN)	Absolute Racing (Proton)	Porsche 911 RSR	1225-1310	Endurance Racing Legends
33	Felipe Fraga (BRA) Dylan Pereira (LUX) Ben Keating (USA)	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	Free Practice 1	
46	Dennis Olsen (NOR) Maxwell Root (USA) Anders Buchardt (NOR)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR	1400-1700	Le Mans 24 Hours
47	Antonio Fuoco (ITA) Giorgio Sernagiotto (ITA) Roberto Lacorte (ITA)	Cetilar Racing (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	Hyperpole	
54	Giancarlo Fisichella (ITA) Francesco Castellacci (ITA) Thomas Flohr (CHE)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	2200-0000	Le Mans 24 Hours
55	Matt Griffin (IRL) David Perel (ZAF) Duncan Cameron (GBR)	Spirit of Race (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	Free Practice 4	
56	Matteo Cairoli (ITA) Riccardo Pera (ITA) Egidio Perfetti (NOR)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR	FRIDAY 20 AUGUST	
57	Mikkel Jensen (DNK) Scott Andrews (AUS) Takeshi Kimura (JPN)	Kessel Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	0900-0945	Porsche Sprint Challenge
60	Paolo Ruberti (ITA) Raffaele Giammaria (ITA) Claudio Schiavoni (ITA)	Iron Lynx	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	Free Practice 2	
66	Thomas Neubauer (FRA) Jody Fannin (GBR) Rodrigo Sales (USA)	JMW Motorsport	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	1040-1115	Road to Le Mans
69	Robert Renauer (DEU) Rolf Ineichen (CHE) Ralf Bohn (DEU)	Herberth Motorsport	Porsche 911 RSR	Race 1	
71	Ben Barnicoat (GBR) Ollie Millroy (GBR) Brendan Iribe (USA)	Inception Racing (Optimum)	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	1200-1245	Endurance Racing Legends
77	Matt Campbell (AUS) Jaxon Evans (NZL) Christian Ried (DEU)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	Hyperpole	
80	Callum Ilott (GBR) Matteo Cressoni (ITA) Rino Mastromarino (ITA)	Iron Lynx	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	1530-2030	Porsche Sprint Challenge
83	Nicklas Nielsen (DNK) Alessio Rovera (ITA) Francois Perrodo (FRA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	Qualifying	
85	Rahel Frey (CHE) Sarah Bovy (BEL) Michelle Gatting (DNK)	Iron Lynx	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	SATURDAY 21 AUGUST	
86	Ben Barker (GBR) Tom Gamble (GBR) Michael Wainwright (GBR)	GR Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	0900-0945	Porsche Sprint Challenge
88	Julien Andlauer (FRA) Lance David Arnold (DEU) Dominique Bastien (USA)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR	Free Practice	
95	Ross Gunn (GBR) Ollie Hancock (GBR) John Hartshorne (GBR)	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	1015-1100	Road to Le Mans
98	Nicki Thiim (DNK) Marcos Gomes (BRA) Paul Dalla Lana (CAN)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	Race 2	
99	Patrick Long (USA) Felipe Laser (DEU) Gianluca Giaudi (ITA)	Proton Competition	Porsche 911 RSR	1130-1145	Le Mans 24 Hours
388	Jeroen Bleekemolen (NLD) Pierre Ehret (DEU) Christian Hook (DEU)	Rinaldi Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo	Warm-up	
777	Tomonobu Fujii (JPN) Andrew Watson (GBR) Satoshi Hoshino (JPN)	D'Station Racing (TF)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE	1215-1310	Road to Le Mans
INNOVATIVE CAR			Race 2		
84	Takuma Aoki (JPN) Nigel Bailly (BEL) Francois Heriau (FRA)	Association SRT41 (Graf)	ORECA-Gibson 07	1600	Le Mans 24 Hours
				1600	Start
SUNDAY 22 AUGUST			Finish		



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